"Walking Tall"

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD THROUGH WOODS - DAY TITLE SEQUENCE

An SUV towing a trailer winds along a twisting road. The corniest country music song ever written in the history of the world PLAYS ON THE SUV's RADIO as it drives by... A FARM. The Old Farmer, out with his dog, waves and smiles.

INT. SUV - SAME

In the back seat, BRAD, 14, and his sister, KATY, 10, her face pressed to the window, watch the Old Farmer.

BRAD
Dad, why is he waving? Do you know him?

In the front seat, the pretty mom of the family, DIANNE, 35, is also watching the Farmer. Next to her, driving and singing along to the country song is TOM GARRITY, 38. He's six-three, with broad shoulders, hair just a bit long.

TOM
That's just the way people are in the country, son. Neighborly.

KATY
He's probably a serial killer.

TOM
Sweetheart, try to be more positive.

BRAD
Do we have to listen to this guck?

TOM
You got something better?

Brad leans over from the back seat to pop in a CD. RAP MUSIC thumps. Brad begins lip synching, making hip hand gestures... Tom CLICKS OUT the CD. Opens the window and <u>tosses it out</u>.

BRAD
Hey! That was Ludacris!

TOM
(dryly)
It certainly was.

Katy leans forward and pops in a CD... Britney Spears. She sings and dances in her seat... Till the whole car rebels!

A pretty farm house comes into view. TITLES END. SUPER: "DOUGLASVILLE, WASHINGTON 2003"

EXT. GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE - SAME

An old couple appear almost before Tom shuts off the engine and the kids start clambering out of the car.

GRANDPA's white hair may be thinning but he's still a strong man with a light step. Katy and Brad run to him.

Grandpa sweeps them off the ground in a big bear hug, and then releases them to the gentler hug of GRANDMA. While she is hugging the kids, Grandpa pumps Tom's hand.

GRANDPA
Welcome home, Tom. Dianne...

He kisses her. She is looking around...

DIANNE
I forgot how beautiful this place is.

Brad spots two llamas parading around the yard.

BRAD
Are those llamas?

KATY
Do they bite?

GRANDMA
Not unless you bite them.

Brad runs after the llamas, who see him coming and flee. Katy joins the chase. Parents and grandparents laugh.

GRANDPA
They're gonna love it here... Once they get their clothes dirty.

As if on cue, Brad grabs a llama's collar, slips, and is dragged through the mud. Parents and grandparents laugh.

DIANNE
I think the llamas are winning.

GRANDPA
This calls for a drink.

GRANDMA
With you, everything calls for a drink.

GRANDPA
It's not every day a man's son comes home.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Grandpa pours drinks. Dianne's eyes roam around... Hunting and fishing trophies, a gun rack, and in its own case, a humongous Winchester Model 1887 lever action 10 gauge shotgun.

DIANNE
What is that? A bazooka?

GRANDPA
Just a little old country shotgun.

TOM
It was my Granddaddy's. They don't make 'em like that anymore.

DIANNE
That's probably a good thing.
(peers outside)
Where are the kids? Maybe I should...

TOM
Honey, they're fine. Just running around being kids. We don't have to watch them all the time here.

GRANDPA
Welcome home.

Grandpa raises his glass. They clink glasses. Dianne's eyes flick to the shotgun as she drinks.

INT. KIDS' BEDROOMS - NIGHT

Brad lies in bed, blankets to his chin, pillows arranged artfully. Dianne bends to kiss him good night and spots... Headphones, hidden by the pillows. She takes them off him.

BRAD
Careful with my sound system.

She puts his Walkman carefully on a night table, kisses Brad good night, and walks through a door to an ADJOINING BEDROOM... Where Grandma is tucking Katy in. Katy looks up at her mom.

KATY
Mom, what's that sound?

DIANNE
That's just the way night sounds in the country, honey.

KATY
It's scary.

DIANNE
In Brooklyn we had police cars and truck horns... And in the country they have...

Dianne pauses... Looks at Grandma for help.

GRANDMA
That's an owl. Never hurt anyone. Especially not a good little girl.

Grandma kisses Katy, who looks dubious, but nods. Grandma walks out, leaving Dianne alone with Katy.

DIANNE
Good night, sweetheart.

Katy checks to make sure Grandma has left. Asks softly:

KATY
Mom... Do we have stay here?

DIANNE
No, but we have to give it a chance. You always liked it here.

KATY
To visit... but not to live. I don't have any friends here.

DIANNE
You'll make new friends.

KATY
Why can't he just get therapy?

Dianne smiles at her precocious daughter. Strokes her hair.

DIANNE
For him, this is therapy. Did you see how happy he was just driving home today? This isn't my first choice of places to live either, but there are lots of worse places.
(beat)
Your father would do anything for you. This is something we have to do for him. Okay?

Katy nods. Dianne kisses her good night. She walks out.

Katy lies back... CAMERA LINGERS on her face... In a strange house, listening to owl hoots. Trying to be brave.

INT. BACK PORCH - SAME

Grandpa and Tom share a drink.

GRANDPA
The army's changed since my day... If they let you wear a mop like that.

TOM
I've been out a little while.

GRANDPA
Never thought you'd quit. You were pretty gung ho when you went in.

TOM
Yeah.

GRANDPA
Fourteen years is a long time.
(he waits a beat, Tom doesn't respond)
I guess you accomplished what you wanted to accomplish.

TOM
Gave it a shot. The world's an ornery place.

GRANDPA
You never were big on providing many details, Tom. But is everything okay?

Tom looks back at him. Doesn't say anything but WE SENSE he's been through some real hell. Grandpa says gently:

GRANDPA
It's gonna be okay now. Family's the most important thing. We're all together now, and it's high time...

Dianne and Grandma come into the room.

TOM
How're the kids?

DIANNE
It'll take them a little while. Your parents are being so kind. We really hate to impose...

GRANDMA
Don't you dare mention that word.

TOM
No, Dianne's right. I checked out two houses for rent on line and I'm supposed to see 'em tomorrow. We'll be out of your hair in a week or two.

GRANDPA
Tom, I've been waiting so long for you to be in my hair that I don't have any left.

As they laugh, Grandpa exchanges a glance with Grandma.

GRANDPA
Hey you remember Allen Dobbs?

TOM
Dobbsie? Sure? Is he still around?

GRANDMA
Nope. Moved out last month. Too bad.

Grandpa and Grandma are smiling. Tom senses something.

TOM
What mischief are you two concocting?

GRANDPA
Oh, he was well set up. Fifty acres. The prettiest little farm house you could ask for.

GRANDMA
Now that farmhouse is on the market.

TOM
Honey, I think we're being set up.

Dianne shrugs and gives a little smile.

DIANNE
If you know who the broker is, I could download a picture... and we could set up an appointment.

GRANDPA
Downloaded it myself. The broker can show it the day after tomorrow.

Grandpa pulls papers off a desk. Hands them to Dianne who chuckles at this set up. She glances at the listing...

DIANNE
We really weren't looking to buy...

GRANDMA
And we don't mean to pressure you...

GRANDPA
But hell, let's do it anyway. Seems like this is as good a place as any to heal up. Business is picking up, there are jobs to be had. Just give us a day or two and we'll get you to fall in love with this town. Tom, you should talk to Hamilton...

TOM
I will. I've got some ideas...

Grandpa refills their glasses... As Dianne passes Tom the property listing. A COLOR PHOTO OF A BEAUTIFUL FARMHOUSE.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATERWORLD THEME PARK - MORNING

Dianne, Katy, Grandpa and Grandma watch... Tom and Brad up AT THE VERY TOP of a water slide... Daring each other to go.

TOM
C'mon, city kid. Don't be scared.

BRAD
What is this? 'Deliverance'?

TOM
I used to go down with my eyes closed.

Tom makes the mistake of shutting his eyes.

BRAD
Be my guest.

Brad pushes Tom over the edge. Tom grabs Brad's 'sled' and drags Brad over the edge. They go down together, screaming.

INT/EXT. GRANDPA'S CHEVY - DRIVING THROUGH TOWN - AFTERNOON

Grandpa, Tom and Brad in front and Grandma, Dianne, and Katy in back. Grandpa's big old car drives past a new mini-mall.

TOM
Check out all this new construction!

GRANDPA
Told you business was good. That's one of two malls going up...

TOM
Where's all the money coming from?

GRANDPA
Average income in town rose five percent last year. Course, progress has its price. This isn't the quiet little country town you grew up in...

TOM
Dianne'll be happy to hear that.

Looking at the mini-mall she spots... A Starbucks!

DIANNE
Thank God for civilization!

TOM
All that education and she thinks a de-caf cappucino is civilization.

Grandpa slows as they pass a pretty brick school.

GRANDPA
There's something you city slickers have never seen before. A rock solid American public school.

TOM
No bars on windows or metal detectors on doors. Whatta ya say, Teach?

DIANNE
Nobody calls me 'Teach' or they get detention. It looks nice.

They pull into a restaurant. A sign says: "RUPE'S BAR-BA-Q"

KATY
They spelled barbecue wrong.

TOM
They know that, honey.

LATER - IN THE ROADHOUSE

Rupe saunters over with a huge plate of ribs and chicken.

RUPE
Here you go, Tommy. Recipe hasn't changed in thirty years.

He puts it down and they all dig in. Brad lowers his rib. Katy spits out a piece of chicken. They look at Tom, who puts his own rib down and takes a big drink of water.

TOM
Now you know why I moved away.

DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Tom and Dianne sit at a country dance hall, watching couples, including Grandpa and Grandma, whirl. A tall, dignified man comes over with his tastefully elegant wife. This is HAMILTON, 73, rough-hewn country nobility. He raises his hat.

HAMILTON
Tom.

Tom gets up, very pleased. Shakes his hand. Turns to Dianne.

TOM
Sweetheart, this is Mr. Hamilton. Gave me my first job.

DIANNE
It's a pleasure. Tom talks so much about you.

Hamilton takes her hand, bows, a true country gentleman.

HAMILTON
The pleasure's mine. I've been waiting for Tom to come home for a decade. And my wife's been waiting about that long for this song to come on. You're gonna have to excuse us. Tom, stop in and see me soon.

Hamilton leads his wife onto the dance floor. Grandpa and Grandma dance to the slower song. Tom offers a hand to Dianne who checks out the dancers and hesitates...

DIANNE
This isn't exactly disco...

TOM
Just hang on and don't step on my feet.

He pulls her up. She laughs as she does step on his feet.

But soon gets it... And then she's in his arms and they're dancing magically. The corny song couldn't be sweeter.

TOM
Hey, city girl. Happy?

She nods. Nestles her cheek against his.

DIANNE
I waited a long time for this.

EXT. HOUSE FOR SALE - MORNING

The beautiful farmhouse we saw in the real estate listing, surrounded by lawns that slope down to a sparkling pond. It's not enormous or lavish, but everything about it seems right.

Tom, Dianne, and the kids stand with the female REALTOR.

REALTOR
The house is seventy years old but has been meticulously updated...

CLOSE ON TOM'S FACE... As he falls in love with the house. Dianne notices. She likes it too. But she's wary.

THE FAMILY ROOM

Katy runs to the walk-in fireplace. Looks for a secret passage.

KATY
Wow! This is like Hogwarts!

EXT. BACK GARDENS LEADING TO POND

REALTOR
The stocked pond is four acres...

The Realtor walks off to give them space. Tom and Dianne watch Brad and Katy run down the sloping lawn to the pond.

BRAD
DAD! I CAN SEE FISH!

Brad and Katy see a food bin. Open it up. Throw chum onto the surface. Fish rise to eat it. Brad and Katy run back and forth along the bank, whooping and feeding the fish.

Tom and Dianne walk hand-in-hand to the pond's edge.

DIANNE
We were going to rent first. See if the move was right for us...

TOM
That's the sensible thing to do.

She looks up at the house... Then at him. He puts his arm around her. Touches her hair. She looks back into his eyes.

DIANNE
Can we afford it?

TOM
Nope.

She nods. Hesitates a long beat... and gives in.

DIANNE
Maybe it'll be some incentive for an ex-soldier to find a job.

TOM
Thank you.

Tom takes her in his arms...Dips her... And plants the kind of kiss on her that almost got Al Gore elected president.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRITY SUV - CENTER OF TOWN - DAY

The SUV drives up the bustling main street. It's somewhere between large town and small city. Two banks, a grocery, lots of stores. They pull up to a four-story stone town hall.

TOM
You ready, pretty lady?

DIANNE
Don't you sweet talk me, Tom Garrity. Just hurry up and park... Before I come to my senses.

INT. TOWN HALL - LATER

Grandpa, Grandma, and the Realtor watch with big smiles... as Tom signs a deed and hands the pen to Dianne.

REALTOR
You're making a very smart decision.

Dianne takes the pen. Looks down at the deed. At her children. At Tom. She takes a deep breath. And she signs. Tom takes the pen from her and kisses her.

EXT. STEPS OF TOWN HALL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Tom tucks papers into an envelope. Hands it to Dianne.

TOM
Here's your house, Ma'am. We can be moved in by the first day of school.

A loud warning SIREN BLARES from a town building. Townspeople, including the Garrity family, look around. Is it a fire? An earthquake? A voice ROARS from a LOUDSPEAKER:

VOICE
ALERT DOUGLASVILLE CITIZENS. THIS IS NOT A DRILL. IT'S THE KING HIMSELF! THE KING HAS RETURNED!

GRANDPA
Looks like some of your friends found you.

TOM
(to Dianne, abashed)
King was my high school nickname...

VOICE FROM WINDOW (OS)
HEY, YOUR HIGHNESS!

A football whistles out of a second story window. Tom catches it. Peers up but can't see anyone.

TOM
That you, Jimmy? Keith?

Three big men burst out a door. JIMMY and KEITH are athletic. RUSTY, bringing up the rear, is chubby, less sure of himself.

JIMMY
GET THE QUARTERBACK!

Tom goes with it, juking and faking till they grab him and soon all four men are wrestling on the lawn. Then they let him up, and dust themselves off.

JIMMY
You used to have better moves.

TOM
You used to have more hair.
(to Dianne)
Honey these are three old friends of mine, Jimmy, Keith, and Rusty. You guys are looking good.

Jimmy is a big, bluff, a friendly 'good old boy'. Keith is better dressed, coifed, has more charm. Rusty hangs back, shy.

JIMMY
Jimmy Sanders. Charmed.

KEITH
Keith Jameson. Always knew Tommy would bring home a beauty queen.

DIANNE
Well, that's very kind of...

RUSTY
These must be chips off the old Garrity block. Welcome to Douglasville, kids. Place hasn't been the same since your old man left. Call me Rusty...

JIMMY
You got time for a quick drink, Tom? We've got lots to catch up on.

TOM
I don't know... I...

Dianne smiles at Tom.

DIANNE
Go ahead, Your Highness. We're gonna do some shopping for school clothes.

Jimmy, Keith, and Rusty lead him towards a Hummvee.

JIMMY
Some fine looking kids you got there, Tommy. Got two of my own. At least the ones I know about...

Jimmy and Keith laugh... and Tom laughs along with them.

INT. HUMMVEE - DAY

They roar through town, a bit too fast...

TOM
Where are we going? Gallagher's?

JIMMY
That old dive's for senior citizens. They play checkers on the bar.

KEITH
Let's take him to the Gypsy!

RUSTY
Guys, he just got here. I don't think that's the best...

JIMMY
Hell, Tom's been out in the world. Won't see anything he hasn't seen before.

The Hummvee ZOOMS through town. Stops at a red light next to RAY'S KUNG FU ACADEMY. Jimmy points it out.

JIMMY
Remember Ray Wallace?

TOM
No kidding? So he's doing good?

KEITH
Not exactly. Served hard time for possession. His grandma died and left him some money so when he got out he opened that place...

The light turns GREEN and the Hummvee roars forward again. RUMBLES down a dirt road. A beautiful RIVER comes into view.

Tied up on the near bank, with a walkway across... WE SEE THE GYPSY LEE CASINO. A garish three-story riverboat casino. Music blares from speakers on the third story. Jimmy rumbles to a stop in the parking lot.

JIMMY
Welcome to the Gypsy. One stop shopping for all a man could desire.

Tom looks at it, not totally happy to see such a garish spectacle in his home town. But Jimmy yanks him forward.

They pass a young WHORE with a good figure but a sad, beaten face, being led towards the bed of a truck by a trucker. Jimmy watches her ass pass by... Lets out a whistle.

TOM
I remember when the only thing we pulled from the river was fish.

JIMMY
Still smells like fish. C'mon...

The trucker disappears into his truck with the whore.

Jimmy leads the way across the walkway... Where they are scrutinized and then waved inside by GIL, 25, the hulking young door security man with muscles and attitude to spare.

Tom and his buddies enter the FIRST FLOOR. Rows of SLOT MACHINES. Old people on stools, gambling away welfare checks.

JIMMY
No sense feeding the one-armed bandits. Come on...

He leads Tom up TO THE SECOND FLOOR. This is the bar floor. Dark. MUSIC THUMPING. Laser LIGHTS STROBING. Whores in skimpy outfits. And one STRIPPER on a stage, gyrating and twisting her body around a brass pole for tips.

JIMMY
Let's get us a seat in muff row!

They find a table near the action.

TOM
How did you guys do that little stunt with the PA system? One of you work for the city?

KEITH
Rusty's the rat catcher.

RUSTY
Pest control officer.

TOM
What about you two?

KEITH
Took over my daddy's shop.

Tom runs his hands through his shaggy mane of hair.

TOM
I might have to pay you a visit.

KEITH
No, Tommy, I'm no barber. I got three stylists who cut hair. I'm just growing the business.

JIMMY
Jessica and I own the grocery. You bring that pretty wife of yours in and we'll get her a Value Card. I won't even run a credit check.

The Stripper sashays over. Keith sticks a five-dollar bill into her G-string and she gives them a private show.

When her dance becomes a little too provocative, Tom looks away. She gives him a long, curious, admiring stare.

STRIPPER
What do we have here? Tarzan? Superman? Or King-Kong?
(beat)
Want a lap dance to wake up the Empire State Building?

Tom shakes his head. She pouts, then turns to Keith and Jimmy.

STRIPPER
We got some new girls you might wanna meet. Just the kind you like.

KEITH
You wanna come, Tommy? Check out the new talent?

Tom shakes his head. They get up and follow her out. Rusty and Tom are alone.

RUSTY
So, what ya been doing in the army?

TOM
Just one of the grunts, peeling potatoes, fixing trucks...

A woman walks up to Tom from behind... Taps him on the shoulder. Her name is DENISE but everyone calls her Deni.

DENI
Want some company?

He turns to look at her. They both look shocked.

DENI
Tom. I... Didn't know...

TOM
Whatta you doing here, Deni?

Tom looks at the whores... At the Stripper. Back at Deni.

DENI
I just... wait tables...

TOM
Oh. Cal lets you....?

DENI
Cal and I split up a while back. You want a drink? On the house.

Tom nods. She goes to the bar to get him a beer. Tom watches her, trying to recover from the shock.

RUSTY
That's one reason I didn't think they should bring you here.

TOM
What's going on, Rusty?

RUSTY
Mostly people just having fun.
(beat, lower)
I'm really glad to see you, Tommy, but maybe you shouldn't have come back. 'Scuse me...

He sees Deni coming back and he leaves so they can talk. Deni hands Tom his beer. Looks at him fondly but warily.

DENI
I never thought you were coming home, Tom.

TOM
I'm sorry you and Cal split...

A shadow falls over them. It's MICKEY, also wearing a security headset. He's an enormous, sleazy pimp of a man about Tom's age, with what looks like a pound of gold chains around his neck, a bald head, and tattooed biceps like illustrated bowling balls. He and Tom recognize each other.

MICKEY
Look what the cat dragged in.

TOM
Mickey. You been pumping iron non-stop since high school?

MICKEY
I gotta keep order with the low lifes that come into this establishment. You might wanna get your feet off the furniture.

Tom looks back at him. Pulls his shoe down from a bench.

MICKEY
Deni, you're dancing next. Get that engine warmed up.

Looking right at Tom, Mickey gives Deni a proprietary slap on the ass. He walks away. Deni feels Tom's gaze.

DENI
Cal left me with a two year old son. I was raising him on welfare.

TOM
You're better than this. You're a classy girl...

Her look shuts him up. Long beat. She asks softly:

DENI
You gonna watch me dance?

TOM
I don't think I want to, Deni.

DENI
We used to have some good times. Make each other feel real good. Remember?

TOM
I remember.

DENI
Bet I could still make you feel real good.

Tom holds up his wedding ring. Deni smiles.

DENI
Those come off. With a little lubrication.

TOM
This one doesn't. Good to see you, Deni. I wasn't judging you. I was just surprised to see you here.

Deni walks up on stage... Starts to strip. Out of the corner of her eye, she watches Tom get up and walk out.

He runs into Jimmy and Keith at the door.

TOM
Let's go...

JIMMY
Go? Are you crazy? You haven't seen the action yet. Come on...

And he half drags Tom up a flight of steps. Tom glances at a high-tech security camera panning constantly back and forth.

They reach THE THIRD FLOOR. Which is a casino floor. Roulette wheels. Blackjack tables. Even a game of craps. They pass an entire table of Asian gamblers.

TOM
Since when did this town become so international?

JIMMY
Since we gave people a reason to drive down from Seattle.

ANGLE ON A SIDE AREA where Mickey is pointing Tom out to BEV, who runs this casino. Bev is 45, decked out in leather, big hair colored an odd shade of blue.

JIMMY
Some lap dancer just snaked all my cash, Tommy. Lend me some money. I'm feeling lucky!

Tom hesitates. Takes out his wallet... Offers him a twenty.

JIMMY
Come on, Dude. This is 2003!
Twenty don't buy nothing.

Jimmy holds out his hand. Tom reluctantly hands him a few more twenties.

Jimmy hurries over to the cashier's booth. Hands the bills to the old CASHIER, who gives Jimmy a stack of chips. Jimmy heads for a roulette wheel. Pushes his way to the front.

JIMMY
Twenty on black!

He puts a chip on black. The wheel spins. He loses. Puts another down. Loses again.

ANGLE ON Tom... Who is watching the Croupier very closely.

JIMMY
Red this time. Whole hog.

Jimmy throws down his remaining chips. The wheel spins.

CROUPIER
Lady luck, spread your legs...

The fingers of the Croupier's left hand move very slightly <u>inside</u> the cuff of his jacket.

Tom sees it... And the Croupier feels Tom's glance and meets his eyes. He knows Tom's on to him.

The wheel slows... moves tantalizingly to a red number... And then to a black number. The Croupier rakes in Jimmy's chips.

JIMMY
Lend me some more, Tommy. I'm
telling you I feel it!

TOM
No, let's go. You're not gonna
win anything here.

Tom turns to leave... Mickey is right there, blocking him.

MICKEY
You just got here, Tom. Why don't
you give lady luck a chance to pay
you back?

TOM
Thanks, but I don't like the odds
here. We're on our way out..

Tom tries to step around Mickey, but the big man puts a hand on Tom's shoulder.

MICKEY
What's wrong with our odds, Tom?

The whole place has gone silent, everyone watching. Tom looks back at Mickey, who is still holding him.

TOM
This table's rigged. He's got a wireless remote keyed to the wheel up his right sleeve.

A few brave Gamblers demand their money back.

ANGLE ON BEV, exchanging a quick look with Mickey. Tom is watching them so he doesn't see...

An enormous bouncer named CARL SCHMIDT, a three-hundred pounder, who steps quickly up behind Tom and sucker punches him, knocking him out and ending the fight before it starts.

Except it doesn't happen that way. It should but it doesn't because Tom ducks at the last second and then pivots and throws a right hand of his own that knocks Carl literally <u>off his feet</u> and onto the roulette table.

There are SCREAMS from the crowd. A stampede for the exit. Keith and Jimmy run for the door. Jimmy catches Keith's arm.

JIMMY
What about Tom...

KEITH
Are you crazy? Let's get out of here.

Keith flees and Jimmy follows him. Rusty starts to follow the crowd out the door and then <u>turns back</u>...

RUSTY
Watch out, Tom!

Carl Schmidt and a slightly smaller colleague named Luke, who is missing more front teeth than your average pro hockey player, grab Tom from behind. Gil, the big front door guard, runs in and punches Tom in the stomach.

Rusty tries to help Tom, but Mickey breaks a bottle over his head and Rusty slumps down, out cold.

Gil steps in to dish out more punishment... But Tom kicks him in the balls so hard it sounds like a football being punted.

Then Tom pulls free from Carl Schmidt, lifts the three-hundred pounder off the ground, and literally body slams him into Luke! The two go down in a heap.

It's one man against half a dozen, but Tom holds his own. He's lightning fast and he really knows how to fight.

QUICK CUTAWAY TO DENI... Watching from a curtained-off area near the bar. Hard to read her face.

For a moment it looks like Tom may actually win. But then PSSSHHHHT... His body goes rigid and then jerks wildly. Bev has TASERED him from behind!

When she turns off the Taser, Tom crumples...

BEV
Let's show this bastard who's in charge.

The Casino is now empty... Except for Mickey and the Bouncers... Who drag the semi-conscious Tom to a table.

Bev takes a knife from her boot. Flicks it open to reveal a scalpel-sharp blade.

TOM'S POV... The knife, Carl's face, Mickey's face, Bev's face. The knife again, now sharply in focus.

Four of them hold Tom down. Bev slices Tom's shirt off him like a surgeon prepping a patient. Her hand strokes his bare chest... Almost a caress... But we sense what's coming.

Mickey sees a <u>coin on a silver chain</u> around Tom's neck. Rips the chain with the coin off. Tom starts to struggle.

Bev cuts Tom's chest with the knife. WE SEE from her face that she's more than a bit of a sadist. The sight of his blood does something for her. She cuts him again. Lots of blood.

Tom screams! He almost gets free... Till Mickey bashes him with a bat. Bev goes on cutting.

EXT. GYPSY RIVERBOAT - DUSK

Rain falls... Making the dusk darker and grimmer. A body is thrown off the ferryboat... INTO THE RIVER. It's Tom.

He sinks like a corpse. Long beat... CAMERA HOLDS ON THE RAIN-SPATTERED SURFACE. Tom finally FIGHTS HIS WAY UP, more dead than alive... And is pulled downstream by the current...

SHOTS OF TOM fighting for his life in the water... Gasping for breaths, being dragged over rocks... AS THE RAIN PICKS UP AND LASHES HIS FACE, and the WIND SWEEPS WAVES OVER HIM...

TOM'S POV... as he rises and sinks and rises again above the waterline... LIGHTS in the distance. A restaurant.

He SWIMS FOR THE LIGHTS. Gives it all he has left. Pulls himself out on a muddy bank. Sees... PEOPLE INSIDE THE RESTAURANT. None of them see him waving...

So he drags himself up on a dock... Fights his way over to the restaurant's big picture window... GETS TO HIS KNEES...

INSIDE THE RESTAURANT... The mother of a family of five... Glances beyond her kids... Sees something silhouetted by a FLASH OF LIGHTNING... She SCREAMS...

As Tom FALLS IN THROUGH THE WINDOW with an explosion of breaking glass. He lies on the floor of the restaurant, a bloody mess, reaching out for help.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - NIGHT

GRANDPA and GRANDMA try to console Dianne who is pacing back and forth. The kids are napping on chairs.

SHERIFF THURMON 50, a serious man, in uniform, enters with DEPUTY GRADY, 40, softer, deferential to his boss. DR. FOSTER comes out, his surgical gown red with blood.

DR. FOSTER
He's gonna make it. More than a hundred stitches. Two cracked ribs.

He shakes his head tiredly. Dianne says softly:

DIANNE
Fourteen years in the army and he has to come home to get half killed.

DR. FOSTER
A lesser man wouldn't have survived it.

Sheriff Thurmon makes a few notes on a pad.

SHERIFF THURMON
Doc, when you write this up I'd like a copy... Including toxicology stats and his blood alcohol level...

DIANNE
You're not trying to imply my husband was drunk and this was his fault?

SHERIFF THURMON
No Ma'am. A fight breaks out in a casino, where men are drinking, I have to cover all the bases.

DIANNE
I haven't seen Tom drunk in thirteen years of marriage. Whoever hurt him...

SHERIFF THURMON
Could have <u>killed</u> him. Don't you misunderstand me. I'll make it my number one priority to nail whoever did this. You just take care of Tom and leave the rest to me. Okay?

DIANNE
Yes, okay. Thank you.

Sheriff Thurmon pats her on the arm. Walks away with Grady.

INT. TOM'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Tom blinks awake. Sees Dianne alone, standing by his bedside.

DIANNE
You okay?

He nods. She looks relieved, says with a tiny grin:

DIANNE
Then I'll kill you.
(beat)
What were you doing starting a fight at a casino?

TOM
I didn't start it.

She studies his face, nods, kisses his forehead.

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - DAY

Brad and Katy watch solemnly as two ambulance medics wheel Tom out of an ambulance, in a wheelchair, towards his house.

Dianne walks with them, urging them to be careful.

When they reach the steps, they prepare to lift Tom, but he stops them. Climbs out of the wheelchair and mutters:

TOM
I'll walk through my own door.

The kids and medics watch. Tom grimaces in pain, but leaning on Dianne he walks slowly into his house.

INT. GARRITY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom and Dianne lie in bed together, on their backs, staring out at the patch of starry sky visible through their window.

DIANNE
The realtor thinks our resale possibilities are strong. I can do all the packing and we can be on the road by Wednesday.

TOM
Honey, I can't leave.

DIANNE
The doctor said you can make the trip. I'll do the driving and...

TOM
I've gotta stay. Help the Sheriff.

DIANNE
You can talk to him by telephone.

Tom sits up, grimaces, looks at her. Beat.

TOM
They... cut me... And cut me... I don't know why. But I'm gonna find out.

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - MORNING

Tom sits in the shade, bandaged and with his leg in a a cast. Dianne -- dressed up a bit -- carries out breakfast. Places it in front of him. It barely registers...

DIANNE
Does this look right for a first day of school?

Tom's far away. She puts her hand on his neck.

TOM
Sheriff Thurmon call?

DIANNE
He will soon. He said solving this is his number one priority.

TOM
There's no mystery to what happened.
(he climbs slowly to his feet)
I'm gonna go see what the hold up is.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

The SUV pulls into the parking lot. Dianne, Brad, and Katy are a bit overdressed for their first day at public school. Dianne and Brad get out. Katy hides in the back.

DIANNE
It'll be okay, sweetheart.

BRAD
Till they put frogs down your shirt.

Katy reluctantly lets her mom pull her out of the SUV.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Tom limps on one crutch into the police station. Right by VERGIL, the fat policeman on duty... Who tries to stop him.

VERGIL
Hey, you can't go in there.

But Tom limps by him, INTO THE BACK OFFICES. Vergil follows him in, calling for him to stop. Grady spots Tom.

GRADY
It's okay, Vergil. How ya feelin', Tom?

TOM
Physically, better. Where's Thurmon?

Sheriff Thurmon comes out of his office and smiles at Tom.

SHERIFF THURMON
Tom! Good to see you up and about.

TOM
How come you haven't made any arrests?

SHERIFF THURMON
Well, the thing is, about that fracas you got into the other day, I can't find one person who saw it your way.

TOM
Did you talk to Keith or Jimmy?

SHERIFF THURMON
I got their statements right here. They both say they ran out right when the trouble started... so they didn't see anything.

Tom glances at the pages... WE SEE HIS FRUSTRATION.

TOM
What about Rusty? He was in there with me.

SHERIFF THURMON
He's gone.

TOM
Gone where?

SHERIFF THURMON
Hell if I know. He's got family up in Vancouver. I'm checking...

TOM
The casino had security cameras...

SHERIFF THURMON
They weren't working that day. Bad luck. By the way, your blood alcohol level came back .11. That's above the legal limit...

TOM
I had one beer.

SHERIFF THURMON
Sometimes one will do it. It tends to support what I'm hearing... Which is that you got liquored up... Put those fighting skills you learned in the military to use busting up the place... Till you got busted back.

TOM
Is that the way you're fixing this?

SHERIFF THURMON
Tom, I heard you bought Dobbs' old place. Now that is a beautiful home. And you have been blessed with a charming wife. If I were you I would count my blessings and let this go...

Tom and Sheriff Thurmon lock eyes. Tom says softly:

TOM
The hell I will.

INT. SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S ROOM - DAY

Dianne stands alone in the principal's spacious office, looking at a... TROPHY CASE... Glittering sports trophies, going back decades. On one prominent placque: "ALL-TIME LEADING SCORERS." The third name... "TOM GARRITY".

PRINCIPAL POTTER walks into his office and pulls his door closed. He looks at her and licks his lips as she turns.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
Ms. Garrity. I just wanted to wish you good luck. I believe this is the traditional gift for a pretty teacher on her first day.

He hands her an apple. She takes it.

DIANNE
Thank you.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
I see you spotted your husband. I played with him. Mostly I sat the bench. It was a championship team. He was one tough son of a bitch. If you don't mind my saying so.

DIANNE
I know he has that side.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
I thought that was his only side. But I'm sure I was mistaken. Still, if I may say so, a most curious choice for a woman like you.

He steps closer. She looks back at him.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
I read your resume. Very impressive. You're a bit overqualified for this school. And for this town.

DIANNE
So far people have been very nice.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
Don't let that fool you. Some of your peers can be quite catty. Especially since you look better than most of them. And you've got an advanced degree. Not to mention you married the football hero of days gone by. We'll have to find a way to keep you happy here.

She looks back at him. He lowers his voice conspiratorially.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
In a small town like this, we must take our intellectual stimulation where we can find it. If you get bored, you will come to me?

DIANNE
I'm sure I won't be bored.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
Come to me with any problems. Consider my door always open.

He smiles at her invitingly. She just turns and walks away.

INT. KEITH'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

A bit more hip and stylish than your average small-town barber shop. Jazz plays. A TV shows stock market updates.

Three chairs with three stylists cutting away. WE RECOGNIZE several customers from the casino. Gil the bouncer waits his turn for a cut, reading a PLAYBOY. Two whores are having their hair dried.

Keith stands at the register, chatting with a customer. He sees Tom walk in... looks worried and then recovers.

KEITH
Tommy, I meant to come by and see how you were healing but...

TOM
You got an office where we can talk?

Keith glances down at the appointment book. Big smile.

KEITH
Hey! We got a hole in our schedule! You come back in an hour... I'll set you up with our best stylist. We'll make some order out of that mop.

He tries to lead Tom out of his shop... But Tom won't go.

TOM
Why are you so nervous, Keith? Hell, we've known each other for years. I'm not gonna get my nose out of joint just 'cause you ran away from a fight and left me hanging...

Keith looks back at him. His smile quivers. Tom gets it.

TOM
Unless I'm not the one making you nervous...

He looks around at the whores, at Gil who lowers his PLAYBODY. And then the barber's chair furthest from Tom rotates around... It's Mickey, getting a shave. He looks right at Tom. His silver and gold chains are dangling from the arm of his chair. He fumbles among them... Finds Tom's coin. Looking at Tom, he CLICKS it on the arm of the chair.

Tom glares at them and then looks back to Keith.

KEITH
Thank God you survived, old buddy. Let it go. Don't make waves.

TOM
What are you talking about? How can you let something like that go?
(beat)
You and Jimmy brought me to that casino. I don't blame you for getting scared and running out. But now you gotta step up like a man and tell the truth.

The barbershop is silent. Keith hesitates for one moment.

KEITH
I'm in the business of cutting hair, Tom. And business is good, real good.

Mickey gives Tom a look: "NOW FUCK OFF"... And spins himself around. The stylist goes back to work on his chin.

Tom gives Keith a long look and limps out.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

A hallway crowded with students getting their books, talking into cell phones, flirting, checking pagers and beepers. This school may be rural but it's not redneck -- the clothes and music mirror what you'd see in any big city.

TRISTA, 16, pretty, pushing the dress code to the limit by showing a lot of skin, stands talking to DOC. He's tall and about as charismatic as a teenager with acne can be.

Trista breaks away from Doc and walks down the hall. She passes Brad who notices her. What thirteen year old boy with hormones wouldn't? She feels his glance and gives him a look and a little smile. She likes being stared at.

Brad is embarrassed... veers away... And stumbles down a flight of steps. Right into ROSS and his buddy SHEDD, two big seniors sipping drinks. Ross' Coke spills all over him.

BRAD
Sorry.

Ross grab's Brad's arm and twists...

ROSS
I'll make you sorry, asshole.

Brad cries out in pain. Tries to break the grip. Shedd points out to his buddy that two teachers are coming. Ross releases Brad just in time... But glares at him as he wipes the soda off. This isn't over yet.

INT. CORNER GROCERY - DAY

Carl Schmidt swaggers up to the register carrying a beer and munchies, elbowing people waiting on line out of the way. Several of them give him dirty looks, but no one says anything.

Carl throws some change at the cashier and walks out, opening the beer as he goes. He nearly bumps into...

Tom who is heading in. The two men pause... Exchange a not very friendly look. Carl takes a swig of beer... Spits it onto the sidewalk near Tom's crutch. And walks away.

Tom limps into the grocery. JESSICA, 37, intercepts him.

JESSICA
HEY! Tommy!

TOM
Hi, Jess. Been a long time, huh? I hear you have two little ones at home. I'm looking for Jimmy.

JESSICA
Oh... he's not here right now.

TOM
I don't mind waiting a few minutes.

JESSICA
He's not coming back today. He's sick.

TOM
Nothing too serious, I hope...

JESSICA
Yeah, it could be... real serious...

Jimmy walks around an aisle, carrying a stock clipboard. He stops dead at the sight of Tom. Tom looks at Jessica.

TOM
Good news, Jess. Speedy recovery.
(Tom focuses on Jimmy)
Old buddy, I need you to tell the truth about that fight the other day.

JIMMY
Well... It's not that simple, Tom.

TOM
How can telling the truth not be simple? I've known you thirty years. You're a stand-up guy.

JIMMY
Okay, I'll go down there with you...

TOM
Good, now what I need is...

JESSICA
YOU NEED? Tom Garrity, what makes you think you have the right to come back after so long and tell people how to behave? If you get into foolishness, that's your business. Our business is running this store.

Tom looks at Jimmy... Who lowers his eyes.

TOM
You guys make fun of Rusty, but he'll stand up and be counted.

INT. SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

Katy walks in... And sees a bunch of popular girls studying her. Small differences in dress and hairstyle... She's got flared jeans, a tiny streak of color in her hair.

POPULAR GIRL
Where'd you get those jeans?

KATY
New York.

Katy doesn't say it to show off. But that's the way they take it. They repeat in whispers: "New York. New York." Katy senses she's done something wrong. Veers away from sitting with them. Walks to a table and sits all alone.

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eats silently. Tom looks at his kids.

TOM
So... how was school?

BRAD
It sucked. Can I be excused?

TOM
Not till you finish your dinner.

Brad stuffs the final piece of meat into his mouth. Spits it into his napkin. Gets up and leaves. Tom looks at Katy.

TOM
How was school, Sunshine?

KATY
He's right. It sucked.

She gets up and leaves. Tom is alone with Dianne.

TOM
Adjustment problems. They'll get over it. So how was your first day, Teach?

DIANNE
It sucked.

Tom looks back at her. Beat. He nods.

TOM
Well, mine sucked too. The Sheriff's not doing squat.

DIANNE
Then why don't we just go?

TOM
Yeah, getting out's probably the smart thing to do...

He stands up.

TOM
But I don't think it's the right thing to do. Thanks for dinner, Sweetheart, I'm gonna take a drive.

He limps out. She watches, worried. Sensing something.

EXT. GYPSY CASINO - NIGHT

The Casino is being shut up for the night. The garish lights are being switched off. Final customers departing.

CAMERA COMES CLOSE ON THE BANK... REVEALING... TOM... In his SUV, hidden by trees, watching the Casino with hard eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMILTON'S MILL - DAY

Tom drives through an imposing steel gate, past a sentry who waves. A sign proclaims: "Hamilton's Lumber Mill." The mill perimeter is ringed by a wire fence. WE SEE...

A sprawling, ramshackle old lumber mill on a bank of the river. It's beautiful in its way... A three-story structure of wood and tin with the sawing machinery on the second floor, and chutes and metal gratings and catwalks tying the whole improbable structure together.

Parts of the mill look anachronistic but at the same time it's been modernized with security cameras and monitors at each sawing station. Giant old saws coexist with new presses.

At the river bank, lumber wrapped in white plastic is loaded onto barges by a huge crane. But even the crane is dwarfed by a four-story wheel loader bristling with forks and top clamps that makes your average fork lift look like a Tonka Toy.

Tom gets out of his car and walks past men working hard in the sun. Rough sawn boards are spit out from the trimmer saws and brought down on the conveyor belt at rapid speed. The men pull these boards off the belt and stack them according to size.

Grandpa is the foreman, directing the stacking. Tom watches till a WHISTLE sounds and the belt slows and stops. Break time. Grandpa wipes sweat from his forehead and sees...

Tom walking up, still using a cane but obviously better.

TOM
You still scream as loud as you used to...

Grandpa replies loudly, making sure his men can hear...

GRANDPA
That's what it takes to get these sumbitches to work hard. You gonna ask for your job back?

TOM
You're doing fine without me.

A tall, strong looking man in a security uniform waves to Tom. This is MORGAN, 40, who offers a hand for a shake.

MORGAN
Ben Morgan. Chief of operations. Come, the old man is waiting for you.

They climb to the SECOND STORY, and keep heading up...

MORGAN
Nice to finally meet you. The old man talks about you a lot.

TOM
How's his health?

MORGAN
Better than it has any right to be. Long as he takes his pills.

They reach the THIRD STORY... Morgan knocks on a closed door. WE HEAR a 'come in.' He motions for Tom to go in.

Tom ENTERS HAMILTON'S OFFICE. Museum pieces from a century of mill work stand near banks of video screens showing everything that's happening at the mill's sawing stations.

Hamilton wears a shirt and tie in the heat. His weathered face lights up at the sight of Tom. He walks over and they shake.

HAMILTON
Tom, I heard about the mix up the other night. How are you?

TOM
I'm fine. How's business?

HAMILTON
Better than it has been. Clinton and his environment nuts almost put us under. Went from six million board feet to three hundred thousand. Now we're back to making money.

TOM
Place looks different.

HAMILTON
We're not getting the same quality of logs anymore... So we have to take smaller pieces and join 'em. It's a whole different business.

TOM
That's kind of what I wanted to talk to you about. I've got a business proposition for you.

Hamilton smiles, sits back.

HAMILTON
Let's hear it.

TOM
Logs have been floated down the river for a hundred years. One in fifty sank. Old growth cedars, trees that don't exist anymore. There are thousands of them on the bottom. I could dredge 'em up, you could cut 'em. We could make a bundle.

HAMILTON
Only problem is, to find out what's down there would require underwater reconnaissance. Very specialized, and expensive...

TOM
I had some training in the army. I could handle it. You interested?

HAMILTON
Very. You mend up a bit, work up a business plan, and let's talk.

They shake hands. Head out. Hamilton looks at Tom, who has stopped and is looking down at the town of Douglasville.

HAMILTON
What is it, son?

TOM
I don't know. This town has changed a lot. Or maybe it's me.

Hamilton puts a friendly hand on Tom's back.

HAMILTON
Tom, I know how you feel. Fifty years ago I came back to this town from Korea... After getting shot up at Chujin. Just a little battle in a forgotten war, but when I got back I was shook up for a long while. And I don't mean just physical wounds.

The two men stand side by side for a beat, staring down at Douglasville. WE SENSE that in some ways Hamilton understands Tom better than Tom's own father.

HAMILTON
Everything seemed different. Darker. You never completely get over something like that, but day by day you heal up. You find a routine, and people you love...
(beat)
This town has changed a lot, and it needs you. Just take it slow.

Tom looks back at Hamilton with real affection.

TOM
Yes sir.

EXT. LUMBER MILL - LATER

Tom waves goodbye to his father and limps towards his SUV. He passes a pile of discarded trims. One is nearly six feet long and several inches thick.

He pulls it from the pile. Thumps it in his hands. Likes the feel of it.

INT. SCHOOL - LUNCHROOM - DAY

Ross and some of his friends are eating near Brad, who sits alone, listening to his headphones.

Ross approaches Brad from behind, carrying a large cup of soda. He lifts the headphones off Brad, who tenses but tries to play it cool.

BRAD
Sorry about the other day.

ROSS
That's okay. No hard feelings.

Ross drops the Walkman into the soda. It shorts out. There's laughter from Ross' friends. Brad fishes his beloved Walkman out of the soda. It's ruined.

Brad doesn't think... He just reacts... He splashes the remaining soda in the large cup all over Ross...

Who comes right after him. Brad runs for it, ducking around a table, bursting out a door.

INTO THE HALLWAY. Ross trips Brad from behind. Brad goes down and Ross stays on top of him, landing a few punches.

A dozen or so kids surround them, cheering, till a teacher breaks through the group. It's Dianne! She hauls Ross off...

DIANNE
GET OFF HIM!

ROSS
Hey, he started the fight. They all saw it. C'mon guys...

The kids disappear down the hall. Dianne looks at Brad.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Brad has boxing gloves on. Tom stands in front of him.

TOM
If you break it, there'll be lots of blood. No way he can continue.

Brad doesn't throw a punch. He looks at his father.

BRAD
Who cares about getting even?

TOM
It's not about that. It's about standing up and being a man. Not letting someone dictate to you how to behave, or take away your freedom. That may sound corny, but it's a principle I've seen men die for.
(beat)
Come. Give it a try.

Tom holds up his palms. Brad punches once. Then his anger takes over and he throws a flurry of punches at Tom's hands.

TOM
You're just punching with your arms. If you want to break a nose, you have to use your body...

Dianne has walked up. Tom sees her and falls silent.

DIANNE
Brad, go wash up for dinner.

He walks off. Dianne looks at Tom.

DIANNE
Breaking noses isn't going to solve anything.

TOM
I was teaching him to stand up. Why is everyone so afraid around here?

DIANNE
Tom, listen. This isn't working. For any of us. That kid I pulled off Brad was just pounding on him. Are you hearing what I'm saying?

TOM
Loud and clear. Now hear me. Where-ever we live, he's at an age where he's got to learn to fight back.

EXT. RAY'S KUNG FU ACADEMY - DAY

The SUV pulls into the parking lot of Ray's Academy.

TOM
I want you to cut Ray some slack. He's been through some tough times.

BRAD
What kind of tough times?

TOM
That's not important. Ray was an All-State left guard on our team... When I rolled right and they blitzed, Ray had my blind side. I put my life in his hands and he never, ever let me down...

INT. ACADEMY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Tom walks into the academy with his kids. It's empty. REGGAE MUSIC THUMPS. And then RAY WALLACE, 38, dreadlocks, walks out of a small office, adjusting his black belt.

TOM
Ray? That you in those pajamas?

RAY
I heard you were home, man. You're looking good.

TOM
This is Katy. And Brad.

Brad is looking at the trophies.

BRAD
Did you win these?

RAY
State Championship, Form championship, Special weapons...

BRAD
Are you gonna teach us to break bricks?

RAY
You ever been attacked by a brick?

KATY
Where are all your students?

A slightly awkward beat.

RAY
That's a very good question.

TOM
Ray, you got an office?

INT. RAY'S LITTLE OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Tom and Ray enter and Tom pulls the door shut.

TOM
Where are all your students?

RAY
I made a mistake a while ago...

TOM
I heard. We all make mistakes.

RAY
Yes 'we' all do, but it's the brothers who do the time. More than two years of my life in that hell hole. Okay, so I paid my debt. Now let me move on. Give me a chance to rebuild, to accomplish something. No way.
(smouldering)
People around here look at me like I still got prison stripes on my back.

TOM
Where'd you learn the kung fu?

RAY
Guy I shared a cell with was a living legend in the penal system.
(beat)
I have so much to teach now... But no one will give me a chance...

TOM
I'm giving you two chances.

RAY
I appreciate that. They look like great kids.

TOM
They are. Some bully beat my son up in school the other day...

Tom stops talking. The two men look at each other.

TOM
Ray, what the hell's going on? No one will tell me the truth, but I know you'll talk straight to me. I nearly got killed in that casino and the police couldn't care less. Everybody's running scared. What the hell's wrong around here?

Ray looks back at him... A slight, sad smile.

RAY
Take your pick. We got casino gambling, prostitution, graft, drugs, and leg breakers from the Casino strutting around Main Street like they own it...

TOM
Why don't people stand up to them? Or the police arrest em?

RAY
Fear, plain and simple. No one can stand up to these guys.

OFF TOM'S FACE

EXT. BANK OF RIVER - NIGHT

The BRIGHT LIGHTS of the Gypsy Lee Casino FLASH on the near bank. MUSIC BLARES FROM SPEAKERS. It's late.

CAMERA PICKS OUT Tom's SUV, parked under some trees, lights out. He's sitting in the front seat, watching the casino.

THE GARISH LIGHTS BLINK OUT. The BLARING SPEAKERS GO SILENT. The last drunken gamblers stagger home across the walkway. A young whore and her john pass Tom, and she laughs.

CLOSE ON TOM'S FACE... He hates seeing this in his town, and he hates what they did to him, but he still hesitates.

WE READ IN HIS FACE his reluctance. He makes a decision and quickly and silently gets out of the SUV. He's carrying the big stick from the lumber yard in his hands.

Tom strides to the walkway. Walks boldly across.

He ENTERS THE GYPSY CASINO. Tom climbs the stairs, passing a few departing customers and whores who gape at him, till he reaches the...

THE THIRD FLOOR OF THE CASINO. Deni sits at the casino bar, which is curtained off from the gaming tables. She sees Tom enter, big stick in hand. She doesn't make a sound as...

Carl Schmidt walks into the casino bar. Sees Tom. Reaches for a knife... Which clatters to the floor as the big stick slams into his stomach. Carl lets out a loud OOOOOFFFF.

AT THE GAMING TABLES... Mickey, Bev, and a few of the other bouncers are chatting, dividing up cash. They hear THUDS.

BEV
Jacko, Max...

Two big bouncers ramble out towards the CASINO BAR AREA, where Tom waits and Deni watches. Tom doesn't attack... But they do. The big stick CRACKS into MAX's face, breaking his nose. And then it's JACKO's turn...

AT THE GAMING TABLES... They hear sounds of a struggle. Before they can react, Max and Jacko stumble back through the curtains into the Casino and collapse, screaming...

The thugs at the gaming tables don't have long to think about who might have wreaked this carnage because... Tom steps through the curtain, big stick in hand.

TOM
You took something from me. I want it back.

Luke charges him. Tom knocks out a few more of his teeth. Mickey tries to draw a gun, but Tom slams the big stick into Mickey's wrist. The gun clatters to the floor.

Deni walks out from the bar area and watches the fight.

Bev also watches. She's got her taser out, waiting for her chance. When Tom is near her she tries to shoot him... But he spins Luke into the path of the taser. Luke goes rigid and flies into her, sending them both to the ground hard.

Two more bouncers run in. They hesitate when they see the havoc Tom is wreaking. Then they dive in and get bashed.

Tom is soon surrounded by nearly a dozen thugs who are either out cold or so badly hurt they can only moan. Tom bashes the last thug so hard the big stick breaks in half.

Tom tosses away the now useless end of the big stick. He walks to Mickey who is moaning on the floor, rips open his shirt, and reclaims the chain with his silver coin.

Then Tom heads to the chip booth. The old Cashier offers Tom a big stack of bills with shaking hands.

TOM
I only want a thousand dollars. That's my hundred dollars from gambling, and nine hundred in doctor's bills. And I want a receipt.

The Cashier forks over the money. Tom counts it... very cool indeed. He hands back some extra bills.

TOM
Sign the receipt.

The Cashier does. As Tom takes the receipt, the Cashier's eyes flick to Bev. As if heeding her silent instructions, the Cashier glances at a hidden rifle in the change booth.

TOM
Mister, your hands are shaking. You miss, it'll be the last shot you ever take.

The old Cashier thinks better of it. Tom backs out of the Casino. He passes Deni at the door, without saying a word.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - ATTIC - EVENING

Tom unlocks a trunk. Inside are army mementoes: Dog tags. Medals. Photos of Tom's unit. Tom takes the silver coin off the chain. Slips it into a satin case. He turns...

Brad is standing in the doorway, watching him.

BRAD
What's that?

TOM
A unit coin. Lots of units in the army design their own.

BRAD
Can I hold it?

Brad walks closer and Tom passes it to him. Brad holds it carefully. On the silver coin is the inscription: "DE OPRESSO LIBER" and a picture of an arrow.

TOM
There's a coining ceremony when they give it to you. It means you're one of them... For life.

BRAD
Is it worth a lot?

TOM
Only to me. I carried it with me over a lot of tough real estate.

Tom stops talking. He sees something through the window. CAR HEADLIGHTS, and a RED FLASHER... A police car! Tom closes the satchel, puts it back on the shelf.

TOM
We'd better go...

CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM DOWN THE STAIRS... To the back door.

Sheriff Thurmon and Deputy Grady have gotten out of their car and stand by the door, talking to Dianne and Katy. They all turn as Tom and Brad walk up.

SHERIFF THURMON
You're under arrest for assault and battery, and armed robbery of the Gypsy Casino.

DIANNE
That's crazy! Tom hasn't been anywhere near that Casino. Tom, tell him he's out of his mind.

She waits for Tom to back her up. But he doesn't.

THURMON
Cuff him.

TOM
Please. Not in front of my family.

Grady nods... Stops cuffing Tom for a second.

SHERIFF THURMON
I said cuff him, Grady.

Thurmon has his gun out. So Tom allows himself to be cuffed.

INT. JUDGE POWELL'S OFFICE - MORNING

JUDGE Laurie POWELL, 50, sits in her office with Sheriff Thurmon. A diploma from Bolt Law School is on the wall. The office is filled with pictures of the Judge's family.

TOM
Fifty thousand dollars bail? They don't ask that much for pre-meditated murder...

JUDGE POWELL
Mr. Garrity, I understand you insist on defending yourself. Do you have any idea what you face?

Tom glances at Sheriff Thurmon... Then back at her.

TOM
Sure. A frame-up.

JUDGE POWELL
Thirty years in jail.

Even Tom is rocked by this.

JUDGE POWELL
I've been reading your record. No prior arrests. An honorable discharge. I hear that you come from a good local family. And I also hear that you have two nice kids.
(beat, softer)
As a mother, I'm very sympathetic to the plight of children when a parent faces long-term incarceration. Let me give you some free legal advice. Plead guilty to the assault charge. Make financial restitution. And I will consider a lesser sentence.

Tom looks back at her. She seems smart and sympathetic.

TOM
How much lesser?

JUDGE POWELL
I'll work that out with Sheriff Thurmon.

Sheriff Thurmon smiles. Tom makes his decision.

TOM
I'll take my chance with a Douglasville jury.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A buzzing courtroom. Reporters. Leading citizens. PAN ACROSS ten men from the Gypsy Casino in casts, on crutches.

On the other side of the aisle, Tom sits alone at a table. Behind him are Grandma, Dianne and the kids.

Old Man Hamilton walks in... Dressed up in a suit. WE GET A SENSE OF HIS POSITION as one of the most respected people in the town as men nod to him, shake his hand, offer him seats.

But he rejects all these offers and walks down the aisle to sit with Dianne, Grandma, and the kids. He sees Grandma's worried look, and says reassuringly:

HAMILTON
The truth will win out.

The BAILIFF pounds a gavel for silence.

BAILIFF
People of the State of Washington versus Tom Garrity, the honorable Penelope J. Powell presiding.

JUDGE POWELL
Against my advice, the defendant has decided to serve as his own counsel. Therefore he cannot claim a mistrial on that basis.
(she looks at Tom)
Will the defense please challenge the jury?

TOM
They look fine to me.

JUDGE POWELL
Will the prosecution challenge the jury?

PROSECUTOR
If it please the court, the jury is satisfactory.

ANGLE ON GRANDPA walking down the aisle with a worried face. He reaches his son, stands by his shoulder and whispers:

GRANDPA
They just fished Rusty out of the river up by Hableville.

Concern shows on Tom's face at this news.

JUDGE POWELL
You may call your first witness.

PROSECUTOR
Call Mickey Heinz.

Mickey gets up... Both his arms in casts and his back in a brace... And walks slowly and stiffly to the witness box. There are audible gasps from the audience at his condition.

DISSOLVE TO:

COURTROOM MONTAGE

A series of shots of injured bouncers from the Gypsy Casino limping to the witness box. The crowd watches, shocked. Several of the jurors look sickened.

Dianne looks concerned. Ray, seated a few rows back, also looks concerned. MONTAGE ENDS with Tom standing uneasily...

JUDGE POWELL
Go on, Mr. Garrity.

Tom doesn't know where to stand, what to say. He's never been in a courtroom before. He turns to the jury...

TOM
A few hours ago my only witness, Rusty Wilkerson, was fished out of the river...

There are gasps from the audience.

TOM
They've already had their say. Seems like they've had that kind of say around here for too long.

Tom pauses and studies the faces of jury members... Older, rock solid citizens who have lived here all their lives. The foreman is actually a woman, white haired, dignified face.

TOM
I had to stand up for myself alone. I didn't go in to rob a casino with just a stick. I went to remind them that there's still a thing in this town called law and order. I went to show them, in the only terms people like that understand, that they may cheat people at their tables but they can't buy, bribe, or threaten their way out of what they did to me.

Tom stands up... Walks closer to the jury.

TOM
They did this!

In one bold move, he rips off his shirt! Stands there, naked from the waist up. Scars and stitch marks criss-crossing his body. Gasps from the audience and the jurors.

PROSECUTOR
The State objects... Stop him!

JUDGE POWELL
You're out of order. Put on your shirt.

TOM
THIS IS WHAT THEY DID TO ME! AND IF YOU LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT NO MAN WOMAN OR CHILD IN THIS TOWN IS SAFE, 'CAUSE YOU'LL HAVE TURNED OVER THE KEYS TO THEM.

JUDGE POWELL
Put on your shirt. I'll hold you in contempt! YOU'RE OUT OF ORDER!

TOM
IT'S TIME FOR THIS TOWN TO CHOOSE WHAT IT WANTS. I GREW UP HERE, IT'S THE HOME I REMEMBERED WHEN I WAS FIGHTING OVERSEAS. WHY IS EVERYBODY SO AFRAID? THIS USED TO BE A GREAT TOWN. IT CAN BE AGAIN. TIME FOR YOU TO CHOOSE!

Judge Powell pounds her gavel. The courtroom erupts in shouts and applause and catcalls and we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

The ceiling fan rotates above the crowded courtroom... and the empty jury box. People stand in the aisles, chatting.

Tom sits at the defense desk, his face drawn. Waiting...

Sheriff Thurmon stands near Judge Powell... And looks very surprised as the jury suddenly comes marching back in.

SHERIFF THURMON
It's only been ten minutes...

He gavels the courtroom to order. The jury members sit.

JUDGE POWELL
Madam Foreman, have you reached a decision?

She stands. Her eyes meet Tom's eyes, his fate in her hands.

MADAM FOREMAN
Not guilty.

The courtroom erupts in applause. Dianne jumps over the rail and Tom picks her off her feet. The kids join the family hug.

Mr. Hamilton shakes hands with Grandpa and Grandma. A few rows back, Ray, sitting with his wife and son, claps happily.

The ten bouncers from the Gypsy Lee get up and limp out, scowling. Judge Powell and Sheriff Thurmon share a long look.

INT. OUTSIDE COURTROOM - LATER

A line of people file out and stop near the door to shake Tom's hand. Dianne and the kids see how much Tom is liked and respected. The jury's forewoman approaches. Tom thanks her. She shakes his hand, looks into his eyes, and says, softly:

FOREWOMAN
You were right. This town needs
to choose. Give us a choice.

Tom looks back at her. Doesn't get it.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Tom, Dianne and the kids walk out. She takes his arm.

DIANNE
Thank God it's over.

Then she stops. Because Tom has stopped. He's looking up at a big poster:: "RE-ELECT AL THURMON FOR SHERIFF." CAMERA COMES CLOSE ON TOM'S FACE. Now he gets it. He turns back to look at Dianne. She reads his face...

DIANNE
Tom, no.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Tom drives. The kids sit silently in the back, listening...

DIANNE
You don't owe anybody anything.
Let's just leave....

TOM
Where? Back to New York? I can't
just let them drive me away...

DIANNE
It's not about what they do to you.
It's about what you do for us.
Think of someone besides yourself...

TOM
How about my parents, my friends, everybody I grew up with? Maybe you should have married the kind of man who could be run out of his own town...

DIANNE
How about the kind of man who cares about his wife and children...

Katy SCREAMS. It's a scream with no words, just a loud yet fragile cry of pain that goes on and on... Till it trembles and breaks apart. Tom slows and pulls the car over.

Katy hides her face in her hands. Says:

KATY
Stop it. Just... Stop it.

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dianne and Tom stand in the kitchen, arguing but trying to keep their voices down, so as not to wake the kids.

DIANNE
<u>They nearly killed you</u>!

TOM
IS THAT A REASON TO RUN? Rusty could have run out of that casino. He stayed to help me, and they fished his corpse out of the river, AND NOBODY'S ASKING ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT IT!

He slams his hand down on a counter. She slams her hand down <u>even harder</u>. She's every bit his equal:

DIANNE
What's it going to take, Tom? Just tell me so when the time comes, I know. Brad being maimed by some school bully? Katy learning to hate school and crying herself to sleep every night? That jerk of a principal putting his hands on me...

TOM
I wish you'd let me straighten him out...

DIANNE
THAT'S NOT THE POINT.

TOP OF STAIRS

Brad stands in his pajamas... By the top of the stairs, listening to his parents fight.

TOM (OS)
What is the point?

DIANNE (OS)
The point is that we didn't move here for you to do more fighting.

WE CAN SEE FROM HIS FACE that he agrees with his mother.

BACK TO SCENE

DIANNE
We moved here for you to heal.

Tom looks back at her.

TOM
No, sweetheart. We moved here 'cause I spent years trying to make a difference... And I couldn't... But I can here. I couldn't make the world safe. I couldn't make other people's homes safe. But I can make my own town safe. There's something very wrong going on here, and I know I can fix it. It's what I have to do... To heal... As you put it...

Long beat. He takes her in his arms and she lets him. He touches her face with real love and tenderness.

TOM
And I can't do it without you.

CUT TO:

ELECTION MONTAGE - THE HOKEY COUNTRY SONG PLAYS SOFTLY

-- IN FRONT OF THE GARRITY HOUSE... Tom pounds a stake with a "GARRITY FOR SHERIFF" poster into his lawn.

-- TOWN CENTER... Grandpa and Grandma drive through town with a "GARRITY FOR SHERIFF" poster on their car. On every corner they see: "THURMON FOR SHERIFF" posters.

-- IN FRONT OF THE GROCERY... Dianne -- uncomfortable but determined -- stands passing out "GARRITY FOR SHERIFF" buttons. She's pointedly ignored by several women.

Deni sees her. Examines her closely. Takes a button. Dianne smiles at her... But senses something. Their eyes meet. Deni pins the button on her sexy outfit.

DENI
Thanks. I'm a big fan of Tommy's.

-- ON MAIN STREET... Brad walks home with Katy. She looks up at a TWO-STORY BILLBOARD for Sheriff Thurmon. He looks up also. She looks proud... He looks a little pissed off.

KATY
Think dad will win?

BRAD
Sure. He's found a new mission.

-- AT THE LUMBER MILL... Grandpa introduces Tom to his crew. Tom offers them buttons. They hesitate...

Hamilton ambles over, takes a button from Tom, and pins it on his shirt. The workers follow the lead of the mill owner.

-- ON A BACK STREET...Tom in a jacket and dress shirt, goes door to door in the heat in a tough section of town.

Not everyone in Douglasville is sharing the wealth. Men with bad teeth watch him suspiciously. Junked cars have been taken apart on front lawns. A dog barks at his heels.

A door opens... A woman with shaking hands looks back at him. Tom smiles... And she slams the door in his face.

-- IN SCHOOL... Dianne in a lab coat, sporting a "GARRITTY FOR SHERIFF" button, dismisses her chem class. She watches Ziggy stumble out, knocking over chairs and nearly colliding with...

Principal Potter who walks in... And pulls the door closed.

DIANNE
I'm a little worried about that boy.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
I'm worried about you, Dianne.
You're violating our school rules.

He reaches out, as if to caress her. She flinches, tries to pull back, but there's a wall at her back. He touches her.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
No politicking on school grounds.

He pulls the "GARRITY FOR SHERIFF" button off her lab coat. His hand grazes her breast. She struggles for a moment, slaps his hand away. Pushes by him out the door.

-- In a SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER... Tom addresses seniors in folding chairs. Brad and Katy pass out little American flags. Katy does it enthusiastically, Brad listlessly.

But Tom is hitting stride. The Seniors listen to what he says... And his words have an impact on them.

TOM
I know you all remember the same thing I remember... This used to be a great town, a jewel of a town. I don't know exactly how it changed, but I know how we can get it back. All we have to do is stand up and be counted...

ANGLE ON BACK OF ROOM... Where Sheriff Thurmon and Bev enter and listen... As the Seniors nod and wave flags.

TOM
If you elect me, the first thing I'm gonna do is find a way to put that casino out of business. I'll have state regulators checking the odds on those machines...

-- In THURMON'S POLICE CAR... Grady drives as Thurmon watches a man uproot a 'THURMON FOR SHERIFF sign and replace it with a 'GARRITY FOR SHERIFF' sign. Thurmon doesn't look panicked... But he's starting to worry.

-- In WILLY'S BAR, a roadhouse catering to a black clientele. Tom walks through the place shaking hands and tacking up campaign posters. Suddenly the bar gets quiet.

Tom turns and sees Sheriff Thurmon and Grady following behind, ripping down Tom's posters and hanging up their own. Thurmon walks over and confronts Tom, trying to provoke him:

SHERIFF THURMON
Give up this crazy election, Tom. You don't stand a chance in hell. Come work for me. I'll make you a Deputy. Y'see, Sheriff is a political job. And you're not exactly a people person. Now, here's some advice. You wanna get ahead, you need to learn to get along.

Tom steps close, looks him in the eye, and says softly:

TOM
I've known you all my life, Thurmon. I always thought you walked tall. Looks like you learned how to crawl.

Tom walks out. Thurmon's face turns red.

SHERIFF THURMON
GARRITY, STOP! I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU!

He hurries out, with Grady trying to calm him down.

EXT. BAR - EVENING

Sheriff Thurmon and Grady emerge from the bar into a heavy rainstorm... And see Tom ZOOM out of the parking lot in his SUV.

SHERIFF THURMON
Grady, did you see that? A callous disregard for our traffic laws...

GRADY
Let him go. You're gonna win anyway.

SHERIFF THURMON
The hell I'll let him go!

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Tom drives through the rain... along a winding mountain highway. SUDDENLY HIGH BEAMS AND A SPOTLIGHT SHINE IN HIS REARVIEW MIRROR. Tom blinks, nearly drives off the road!

IN THE POLICE CAR... Thurmon grins. Speeds up towards the large "GARRITY FOR SHERIFF" poster on the back of Tom's SUV and BUMPS the SUV's rear fender hard from behind.

Tom nearly goes off a steep bank... fights for control. Thurmon's enjoying this. But Grady's not. He's scared stiff.

GRADY
Slow down, Al. Please...

But Thurmon speeds up! BUMPS TOM AGAIN, HARDER. Tom's SUV skids wildly. Spins to the very edge of a bank and stops.

Thurmon chuckles... And then goes around a hair-pin turn and sees, too late... A SEMI coming his way! He jerks the wheel, avoids the semi, <u>but loses control of his own car</u>.

The police car fishtails on the rain-slicked road. With a terrible SCREECHING OF TIRES it spins over the bank, rolls end over end down a steep ravine... And BURSTS INTO FIRE.

Tom jumps out of his SUV. Runs down the side of the ravine. Risking his life Tom pulls Grady out of the police car. Which bursts into fire and then EXPLODES! The RED FLAMES FLICKER on Tom and Grady's faces...

INT. GYPSY RIVERBOAT - BAR AREA - NIGHT

The Casino bar, closed for the night. Grady finishes a drink, flanked by Bev, Mickey, and several of the bouncers. Luke brings Grady a stack of hundred dollar bills.

BEV
More than you earn in a year. All ya gotta do is say Tom deliberately ran you off the road. That's murder, and it'll be the end of him.

GRADY
I'll think it over.

He stands... leaves the money on the counter. Heads for the door. Mickey grabs him.

MICKEY
There's nothing to think about...

Grady pulls free. Mickey pulls out a knife. But Grady pulls out a gun.

GRADY
Tom saved my life.

He backs toward an exit. Gil blocks his way. Grady SHOOTS inches from his feet. Gil steps aside and Grady leaves.

BEV
Sometimes you just can't figure people. There's no time to get anybody new on the ballot. We'll have to throw some money at this and elect a corpse. Ten thousand should do it. Get some big billboards. Then we can use our connections to get the right man appointed in Thurmon's place.

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - NIGHT

A TV gives election results. Tom sits up with his family and friends, including Ray and Hamilton.

GRANDPA
They should have the results soon.

BRAD
Yeah... Well... I'm tired. Good night, everybody.

Brad heads upstairs. Katy yawns.

GRANDMA
Time for bed, honey?

KATY
No way. I'm staying up...

They hear HORNS AND SIRENS. A WHOLE CONVOY OF CARS. Tom walks outside to meet them. The lead police car pulls up.

GRADY
Congratulations... Sheriff!

Katy and Ray high five. Hamilton thumps Tom on the back.

HAMILTON
I knew this town would come through.

Other cars pull up, all HONKING HORNS. WE SEE people Tom touched during his campaign. The jury forewoman gets out of one. A van from the senior citizens center pulls up and some old people get out. They congratulate Tom.

GRANDPA
Sheriff Garrity! This calls for a drink!

Tom looks up from the celebrating throng and sees Dianne standing at the door, pensively...watching.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Tom stands by a Sheriff's car... in his new uniform... and addresses his three deputies... Grady, Vergil, and COOMBS.

TOM
There's something wrong in this town, and we're gonna find out what it is. And I know just where to start...

INT. GYPSY CASINO/EXT. PARKING LOT - SERIES OF SHOTS

IN THE CASINO... The roulette wheel spins... Stops... And people win! The croupier doesn't look happy as he pays out chips. Bev doesn't look very happy either. Grady is standing nearby, in uniform, eyeballing the croupier.

IN THE PARKING LOT, FROM A SURVEILLANCE VAN, Coombs watches, and photographs... whores leaving the Casino with various men, getting into trucks. CLICK, CLICK... FREEZE FRAME...

And WE SEE EVEN MORE INCRIMINATING PHOTOS... SHOT THROUGH TRUCK AND CAR WINDOWS... Whores inside vehicles, selling baggies of <u>white pills</u>, tucking the cash into their panties.

IN THE GYPSY'S BAR AREA, Deni is on 'stage' doing a slow striptease. She sees...

Tom walks in, with two men in suits. They pass Mickey. He and Tom exchange unfriendly looks. Mickey whispers into his headset as Tom and his group sit down.

Tom glances at the stage. Deni smiles and peels off her bra. Tom swallows. There's still something pretty strong between them, despite all the years and his wedding ring.

Applause and whistles from the audience. Bev appears... looks at Mickey. Tom waves her over to the table.

TOM
These gentlemen are from the State Gambling Office. Ed has some questions about the odds on your slot machines, and Travis here wants to take a look at your books.

BEV
I'll find someone who can show them around.

TOM
Why don't you do it yourself.

Bev shoots Tom a furious look. She leads the men away. As soon as Tom is alone, Deni walks over.

DENI
Hi, Sheriff. I voted for you.

TOM
Thanks. Listen, Deni, you better look for another job. I'm gonna put this place out of business.

Deni smiles back at him. Finds this amusing.

DENI
You look handsome in your uniform, Tommy. Did you like my dancing?

Tom can't help himself. He looks at her body. WE SEE MICKEY watching this exchange with interest.

DENI
I saw your wife the other day. She looked very nice.
(she touches his shoulder)
But you don't always like it nice, do you? Sometimes you like it rough.

Tom gets up and walks out, following the two State regulators. Mickey walks over to Deni.

MICKEY
What was that about?

DENI
He still loves me.

MICKEY
Good. 'Cause I own you.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Tom and his Deputies sit around a table... With Judge Powell. He's showing her photos of different girls coming out of the casino with different men.

JUDGE POWELL
Prostitution is a felony in this state. But can you prove the casino sanctions it or profits from it?

Tom produces photos of the drug transactions. And dumps a few white pills on the table.

TOM
I can prove the girls are selling methamphetamines to their johns.

Judge Powell studies the pictures. And Tom studies her.

JUDGE POWELL
But not on the premises. You can bust the girls if you want.

TOM
Which side are you on?

JUDGE POWELL
The side of the law. You wanna shut that Casino down? You need more.

CLERK
Sheriff. 'Scuse me. It's the school. Your wife calling.

INT. SCHOOL - NURSE'S OFFICE/OUTSIDE OFFICE - OFFICE - DAY

Dianne's zoned out student, Ziggy, lies on a cot, his eyes unfocused, breathing rapidly and shivering so hard the school Nurse has to physically hold him.

A few feet away in the little office, Principal Potter and Dianne argue heatedly. Principal Potter holds a pipe.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
You found this in his pants pocket? Which means you, a female teacher -- put your hand in his pants? Did he give you permission to be searched?

DIANNE
Look at him. He can barely talk. Why aren't you calling a doctor?

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE Doc walks by. He glances in, but he can't see much. He passes a window, glances outside, and sees a police car pulling up. For a second, he looks worried.

BACK INSIDE THE NURSE'S OFFICE the argument between Diane and Prinicpal Potter continues.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
It could be a fever, a flu...

DIANNE
He's having paranoid hallucinations. Call a doctor.

She picks up the phone. Principal Potter grabs her wrist.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
YOU LISTEN TO ME. We bring in hospitals and emergency rooms and we'll have reporters sniffing out a drug story that doesn't exist. We do not have a drug problem at this school...

He breaks off as Tom enters in his Sheriff's uniform...

PRINCIPAL POTTER
What are you doing here?

Dianne nods at Ziggy. Tom takes a flashlight from the nurse's shelf, bends, and SHINES THE BEAM in the boy's eyes.

TOM
Hi, son. What did you take and who did you buy it from?

Ziggy takes a mouthful of water from a paper cup. Motions for Tom to come closer, as if he wants to reveal a secret. Ziggy spits the water out into Tom's face. Tom wipes it off.

TOM
Call an ambulance for this boy. What's his locker number?

PRINCIPAL POTTER
His locker is school property, but the inside legally belongs to him.

Tom looks up from Ziggy to Principal Potter.

TOM
You haven't changed much since high school, Hal.

PRINCIPAL POTTER
You're wrong. I'm the Principal now. This is my school.

TOM
And I'm the Sheriff. This is my town.
(to the school nurse)
Call 9-1-1. Get an ambulance.
(he sees her hesitate)
I'm not asking you. I'm telling you.

The nurse picks up the phone. Dials 9-1-1.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - LATER

Tom stands in front of a student locker. Dianne stands next to him. Principal Potter shakes a finger at Tom...

PRINCIPAL POTTER
I forbid you to tamper with that lock.

TOM
Okay.

Tom KICKS the metal locker hard enough to dent it... BAM!

TOM
My wife tells me you've been very friendly in welcoming her, Hal.

This time Tom punches the locker, BAM! The dent deepens.

TOM
I really appreciate you looking out for her.

BAM! BAM! Principal Potter draws back, intimidated. Tom pries the door off its hinges with an awesome display of strength.

Inside are several backpacks. Tom dumps the first one out on the floor... only books. But the second one contains a considerable quantity of Marijuana... and a two-foot bong.

TOM
I'd say you do have a little drug problem here, Hal.

Tom's spots a baggie containing a few small white pills.

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE - DAY

ELDON, 10, shoots baskets in the driveway. When he sees the Sheriff's car drive up, the boy runs to the house and a few seconds later re-emerges with Ray. Ray grins at Tom.

RAY
Hello, Sheriff Garrity. Look at you! A uniform and a silver star...

TOM
Ray. I busted a kid at the school for smoking grass.

RAY
Eldon, go inside.
(Ray waits for his son to get out of earshot)
So, you busted him. Problem solved.

TOM
Problem not solved. This kid was flying. I had the police lab in Lakeville do a workup on his stash. It was more than twenty percent THC.

Ray looks back at him. Whistles...

TOM
Super high grade BC Bud. Smuggled over from Canada by Vietnamese gangs and Hells Angels who deal it on back roads up in the mountains.

RAY
You've been doing some homework.

Tom produces the baggie of white pills.

TOM
I also found these in the boy's locker. High-potency ingestible methamphetamine. The police lab says its identical to what the girls in the Casino are selling. I don't know for sure that the pot and the meth come from the same source, but if they do, and I can nail down a connection between the Casino and drug smugglers, I can shut them down once and for all. But I need help. I read your record. You once moved in that world.

Ray looks at him. Not pleased to have his record brought up.

RAY
And then I moved away from it.
Can't help you, Tom. Sorry.

Ray starts to walk away. Tom grabs his arm. Ray spins around. No longer smiling.

TOM
You run your mouth a lot about how this town owes you a second chance but nobody will trust you. Well I never saw stripes on your back. Ray, I know you got a good heart, and I need you now...

Ray pulls loose with an effort. They face each other.

RAY
I got my family to think about.
I'm not messing with those guys.

TOM
Your boy goes to that school same as mine. You wanna teach self defense to the kids here? Why don't you help make their school safe?

A long, angry beat. Finally Ray nods.

RAY
Okay. I'll tell you where to look.

TOM
No. Show me.

Tom reaches into the police car. Pulls out a gun and a badge. Ray backs away. Tom shoves the gun into Ray's stomach.

RAY
That's crazy. I'm an ex-felon...

TOM
Nope. You're a Deputy Sheriff.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE - MORNING

With reverence and also clear reluctance, Tom lifts the top of the glass case and takes out his grand daddy's enormous shotgun. Then he looks up. Dianne is standing there.

DIANNE
I thought Tom the solider was done with guns.

TOM
I won't shoot it. I won't even carry shells for it.

DIANNE
Tell me why?

TOM
The Sheriff needs a gun in his hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADS - DAY - POV THROUGH BINOCULARS

THE FOOTHILLS OF THE CASCADES. A black van drives along a beautiful mountain highway. In the MAGNIFIED POV OF THE BINOCULARS, WE SEE the van and its Vietnamese DRIVER.

RAY (V.O.)
Three more inside, all packing.

A motorcycle trails it by about a hundred yards.

RAY (V.O.)
Trail guard... Also packing.

ANGLE ON THE VAN as it turns off the highway and bumps down a logging road. A CUSTOMER on a dirt bike is waiting.

The van stops and Two Vietnamese gangsters get out and start talking to the customer. The motorcycle Guard rides close.

Suddenly Tom steps from the trees. All alone.

TOM
Hands up. You're under arrest.

They turn to look at him, not quite believing this. The Gangster nearest him pulls out a knife. Tom grabs his knife hand and breaks his arm with one strong twist. The Gangster screams in agony, his arm now hanging at an unnatural angle.

Tom barely breaks stride. He walks to the van. Taps on the windows with his shotgun.

TOM
Come on out of there. You're all under arrest.

The GANGSTER CHIEF, 50, baseball cap, gold teeth, emerges from the van. Doesn't look happy.

GANGSTER CHIEF
Who the fuck are you?

TOM
Sheriff Tom Garrity. You're under arrest.

The CHIEF nods at two of his men who get out of the Van behind him. Both holding AK-47s.

Tom's eyes flick to a tree... Ray waves down from a branch, a gun in his hands. The Chief realizes it's a set up.

CHIEF
We're leaving. Try to stop us and you die.

He barks something in Vietnamese. Climbs back into the van. His men follow. They ROAR back up the logging road and see...

The road blocked off by a barricade of police cars.

They pull a SCREECHING TURN onto the only access road. The van bumps along the rocky access road at high speed. It reaches a ford across a stream. The stream itself is just a trickle. The van starts down across the twelve foot dry stream bed. Before it can climb the far bank...

BOOM. A tree topples down in front, blocking their path. They try to back up... BOOM, another tree falls, sealing them in.

The Trail Guard has seen enough. He zips off into the trees on his Harley. The Customer on the dirt bike tries to follow, but Ray knocks him off the dirt bike and gets on it himself. Ray takes off after the Guard.

INSIDE THE VAN

The gangsters are stunned at the two barriers that have suddenly immobilized their van. Then comes a third, louder BOOM... From upstream. They can't see exactly what it is... But they can see enough to look really scared now...

A beaver dam has been BLOWN UP. Water and logs flow down the stream bed... Drag the van fifteen feet and then turn it over on its side, pinning it against a far bank.

The gangsters panic as water starts to cover the van. They get one door open. And see...

Tom stands atop the bank, shotgun in hand. Several of his armed deputies stand with him.

TOM
Now, come on out of there one by one with your hands up.

And they do.

LOWER DOWN THE MOUNTAIN

A wild downhill chase. The Harley is faster but the dirt bike is better adapted to rough terrain. Ray gets close enough to jump off the dirt bike and knock the Harley driver off.

Ray lands hard and gets up slowly. He draws his gun...

RAY
Police. Don't move...

But the Guard flies through the air with a spinning kick that knocks the gun out of Ray's hand, into the underbrush.

The Guard is a muscular young Vietnamese gangster. He sneers at Ray... And strikes an impressive martial arts pose. He whips through a series of impressive kicks and punches.

Ray strike a kung fu pose in return. Unlike the Guard's flashy movements, Ray stands stock still, only his eyes moving.

The Guard attacks with whirling kicks and punches. Ray by contrast uses only a bare minimum of motion. He blocks a punch and kicks the Guard to the ground. Fight over. In a second Ray's on the guy's back, handcuffing him.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Five Vietnamese gangsters and a Local Customer are led in in handcuffs. Judge Powell raps her gavel.

JUDGE POWELL
Sheriff Garrity, this court orders you to set these men free.

TOM
Set them free?

JUDGE POWELL
You were outside your jurisdiction. You did not have reasonable and articulable cause to surveil and stop their van. It was licensed, they operated it at the speed limit...

TOM
We were looking for a van with Vietnamese gangsters...

JUDGE POWELL
Sheriff, are you aware the law of this state prohibits racial profiling?

TOM
I'm aware they had half a ton of BC Bud in their van.

JUDGE POWELL
Irrelevant. The Fruit of the Poisonous Tree Doctrine clearly states that anything taken or derived from an illegal or warrantless search must be excluded. You've left me no choice, Sheriff, but to order you to set them free immediately.

The Gangsters grin and hold out their wrists.

INT. JUDGE POWELL'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Tom and Judge Powell face each other across her desk.

TOM
How could you just let them go?

JUDGE POWELL
You run the streets. I run the courts.

TOM
I bring them in, you set them free. From now on I want maximum penalties.

JUDGE POWELL
What you want is irrelevant. Jura novit curia. That's Latin for 'the court knows the law.'

Tom spots a thick legal codebook on her desk. Picks it up.

TOM
Then I'll learn the law. The next time you hand out a joke punishment, Monitoris rearus, judge. That's Latin for watch your ass.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK STREET OF TOWN/INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

The same run-down street Tom campaigned on during the election. Cars disassembled and rusting on front yards. Sad looking people watch a police car cruise slowly by.

RAY (OS)
Seven years ago meth hit this county like nothing else ever did. Filled up the prisons. That's what those cars are about. Men on Meth take 'em apart and put 'em back together all night long. Nobody knows why. They're called tweakers.

Tom pulls the car over near a lot where a bunch of kids are playing ball. Tom and Ray watch the kids. Tom asks softly:

TOM
So where are they getting it, Ray? There was half a ton of BC Bud in that van, but no trace of meth. I checked traffic stops and drug interdictions county wide -- lots of pot, cocaine, alcohol... But zero methamphetamine. The whores at the casino are dealing it like playing cards, it's popping up in school lockers, and this neighborhood looks like a war zone. But they're not bringing it in from outside...

RAY
They don't need to. They can cook it up themselves right here. Little mom and pop labs. Buy the ingredients over the counter at drug stores. Cough syrup... Iodine...

Tom continues driving down the block. They see a woman with bad teeth, staring back at them. Her hands shake terribly.

TOM
So if these labs are all over the place, how come we can't find them?

RAY
Because they're all over the place. Kitchens, garages, barns, trailers. They could be cooking it up right on this block... You'd never know.

TOM
Somebody's making it, somebody's supplying the casino. We'll go house to house if we need to...

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Katy sits alone at a table reading a news story in a local paper. There's a big picture of Sheriff Garrity with his shotgun. The headline reads: "SHOTGUN PACKING SHERIFF FORCED TO LET POT DEALERS WALK."

She looks up to see a cute boy, SAM, walking up. She quickly folds over the newspaper so he won't see.

SAM
You're Katy, right?

She nods, a bit defensively. People have been mean to her.

SAM
My name's Sam.

KATY
I know. You're in my math class.

SAM
Don't remind me.

Katy interprets this the wrong way. Thinks he's going to say something hurtful.

SAM
I got a C- on that test. I saw you got an A. Do you think you could help me study?
(Katy nods very slightly)
Why do you always eat alone?

KATY
Nobody wants to sit with me.

Sam shrugs, sits down at her table. Spots the newspaper.

SAM
That's your father? I think he's really cool.

Katy rewards him with a little smile. He smiles back.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Tom speaks to his Deputies, who sip coffee.

TOM
A meth lab makes six pounds of toxins for every pound of drugs, so they're hard to hide. I've got an advisory from the FBI on what to look for...

He distributes it... And his Deputies look it over.

TOM
Run-down homes, boarded up or blacked out windows... Renters who pay cash...Unusually high night traffic...Strange odors like nail polish, cat feces,...

VERGIL
Chief, that describes half our town.

There are laughs, till Tom cuts them off.

TOM
Then we'll check out half the town. But the best clues are the human ones. Be on the lookout for senseless, violent crimes committed for petty cash. Meth addicts are paranoid, have nervous twitches, and bad teeth. We wanna bust 'em and trace them back to their source. Any questions?

COOMBS
Whoever's making the stuff is not gonna like us poking around.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK NEAR RIVER - DAY

A hand ominously raises a gun AND FIRES. There are screams.

PULL BACK to show it's the starting pistol for a race. We're at the annual mill picnic on a bank of the Osholo River.

Fathers and daughters, their ankles tied together, stumble over grass towards a finish line while onlookers cheer. Tom and Katy are near the front, moving up fast.

Dianne, Grandpa, and Grandma cheer. Sam stands nearby, also cheering Katy on. But Brad looks bored. His gaze swings longingly to a few kids his own age on a nearby swing set.

Trista is swinging, her hair flying in the wind, being pushed by Doc. Doc feels Brad's gaze. Looks back at him.

Brad looks away quickly. He begins to walk away from the picnic, all by himself. Doc watches him go. Follows.

Meanwhile, the race is coming down to the wire. Tom and Katy put on a burst of speed... break the ribbon first!

LATER - AWARD STAND

Tom and Katy up on a stand. Hamilton finishes a speech, very much the benevolent grandfather to the town:

HAMILTON
I'm thrilled to announce the mill will be donating two thousand dollars to the police department so that our new chief can buy himself some fancy new equipment.

There are loud cheers. Hamilton puts his arm around Tom.

HAMILTON
He wore our nation's uniform proudly. Now he's come back to restore law and order to our town, and win the father-daughter race!

He hands Tom a big watermelon. Tom holds it aloft, very much the local hero. Townspeople cheer... Especially several local women. Dianne watches them surround Tom.

Brad wanders away from the picnic. He turns. Sees his father surrounded by well wishers. Brad walks away faster.

ANGLE ON BRAD

He's found a hidden spot. Sits down, glad to be alone. Till he hears someone. He pivots. It's Doc and Trista... Who sit down next to him.

DOC
That fucking picnic. Could there be a more boring way to waste a Sunday? You want a smoke?

Brad shakes his head. Doc lights a cigarette for himself.

DOC
I hear you moved from New York. That must've been pretty cool.

BRAD
It was.

Doc passes his cigarette to Trista who takes a puff and then offers it to Brad... who hesitates and then takes it. He tries a puff. Coughs.

DOC
Don't inhale.

Brad tries again. Gets it this time. Trista smiles at him.

DOC
So... I saw your dad at school. Must be a drag having your old man trying to bust people. Does he ever talk to you about it?

LATER - SWIMMING AREA IN RIVER

Dianne floats on a raft. Suddenly, it <u>begins to move</u>. She thinks maybe it's the current. Tries to swim against it. But she's being pulled out of the swimming area!

Tom surfaces, laughing. Still towing her down river.

DIANNE
I thought you were busy with your admiring public.

TOM
And I thought it was time you saw the famed Osholo River. One of America's great unsung waterways. They make a lot of fuss about the Mississippi, but the Osholo goes on downriver for more than two hundred miles... before it flows out to sea near Seattle...

DIANNE
Is that right?

They turn a bend in the river. It's a little more private. But there are still kayaks... Children screaming nearby.

TOM
It has many uses. Fishing. Commerce. They say you haven't made love unless you've made love on the banks of the Osholo.

She looks back at him.

DIANNE
Tom... No... There are people all around. We can't here.

TOM
You're right. But we can over there.

And he tows her towards a grassy spot hidden by tall weeds.

A FEW SECONDS LATER they're kissing on the grassy bank. He tries to take off her top. She holds it on.

DIANNE
Tom, we shouldn't. What if someone sees?

TOM
I guess... They'll be jealous as hell...
(looks into her eyes)
That I nailed the sexiest girl at the picnic.

She grins... puts her arms around him and kisses him back.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Ray is just leaving the town's supermarket when he sees a pick-up skid to a stop and three huge, wild-eyed men run in, knocking an old lady to the ground...

Ray watches as the three men begin a berserk rampage of mayhem and robbery in the crowded store. Two of them scream at customers to hand over their money. A third man, a seven-foot-tall GIANT, lifts a cash register off its stand and hurls it to the ground till it cracks open and money spills out...

Ray runs out to the parking lot and grabs his police radio:

RAY
This is Patrol Car 3 Calling 501...

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - DRIVEWAY NEAR GARAGE - SAME - INTERCUT

Tom presents Brad with... A small Golden Retriever.

TOM
Happy Birthday a little early. A country boy needs a country dog.

BRAD
Thanks. He's great. Now I'll have someone to hang out with.

Tom looks at his son. Tries to make it a joke.

TOM
Hey, there's a law against making the Sheriff feel guilty.
(Brad doesn't smile)
Brad, I know I've been too intense about work. Pretty soon we're gonna make some breakthroughs and then I'll have more time to hang out with you ... Hold on, I'm getting a call.

BRAD
If you wanna talk to me, maybe you shouldn't answer that phone.

But Tom opens his car's door. Grabs the speaker.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - SAME

Ray can see through a window, all hell breaking loose inside.

RAY
I'm at Jimmy's Market. Three big guys are busting up the place.

TOM (OS)
Well, pick 'em up.

RAY
There are three of them. Big. White.

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME

TOM
Ray, you're a Deputy Sheriff and a kung fu man. Now pick 'em up.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - SAME

Ray hangs up the phone. Draws his police pistol. Looks dubious but heads back towards the market.

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME

Tom hangs up... turns back to Brad apologetically...

TOM
Sorry. It's my job... I...

BRAD
It's not a job. It's a mission. It's hard enough being the Sheriff's kid. I thought you were coming home to spend time with us. Wasn't that the whole point of us moving here? You had to find a new battle to fight. Go fight your battle. I'll hang out with the dog...

TOM
BRAD... Wait a minute...

Tom takes a few steps after Brad and then stops. Thinks about his conversation with Ray. Realizes he's made a mistake and sprints for his patrol car.

INT. SUPERMARKET - SAME

The three men are terrorizing customers, smashing up the place. One of them has Jessica backed up into a corner, screaming in terror. Jimmy tries to help her, but he's knocked to the floor by another of the crazed robbers.

Ray appears, pistol in hand. He SHOOTS at the ceiling.

RAY
Police. Freeze.

The Giant picks up the big store safe and charges Ray. Ray SHOOTS but the bullet deflects off the safe's door.

The Giant plows into Ray who goes down hard and loses his gun. He rolls to his feet, just in time to see the three big men charge him.

Ray ducks under one punch and knocks the Giant sprawling with a flying kick that Bruce Lee would have envied. The customers and store workers watch the battle, cheering Ray on.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Tom pulls up in his police car and sees... Ray back out of the supermarket. He's bleeding, his shirt has been ripped off... But he's marching the three big robbers out at gunpoint.

Grady and Vergil pull up and take charge of the prisoners. Tom grins at Ray.

TOM
See, that wasn't too hard.

RAY
They could have killed me.

TOM
Would've been a shame. Just when you're becoming a local celebrity.

Tom nods and Ray looks over. The customers have followed him out of the supermarket. A female CASHIER comes over...

CASHIER
Could you teach me to do that?

A young Boy drags his Mother over.

MOTHER
How young do you start teaching kids?

JESSICA and Jimmy walk out of the store. Jimmy looks at Tom for a long beat, then at Ray.

JIMMY
I just wanted to thank you for what you just did.

JESSICA
Thank you.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Tom and Ray watch as... Judge Powell pounds her gavel. She glances at the three large men who robbed the supermarket. Then she looks at Tom... who gives her a warning look.

JUDGE POWELL
Two hundred dollars or a week in jail.

The men pay cash and go their way. Ray looks disgusted.

RAY
You risk your life for two hundred dollars.

The Giant turns and approaches Ray. He's still ferocious-looking, but at the same time somehow oddly vulnerable. Bad teeth. His face twitches...

GIANT
Just wanted to say... Sorry. We were running on meth. Shit eats your brain. I'm a Christian. I could'a killed a woman or a child and I wouldn't have known I was doing it. I owe you one.

He reaches out a terribly shaking hand. Ray tries to shake it, but then realizes the big man is not trying to shake...

GIANT
I'm going into this program in Spokane... Won't need this shit...

Ray turns his hand and the Giant drops a baggie with some white pills into Ray's palm.

TOM
If you owe him one, tell us where you bought the stuff.

GIANT
Louiston.

Ray and Tom watch the giant walk away unsteadily.

TOM
Louiston? That's fifty miles upriver.

INT. RAY'S KUNG FU ACADEMY - DAY

Ray now has twenty students of all ages. He corrects the posture of one student, the arm positioning of another. He's a good teacher. And he looks happy. Katy sports a yellow belt. Ray uses her to demonstrate a defensive move:

RAY
If you're grabbed from behind, it doesn't matter how big they are...

He grabs her. Katy breaks the hold and flips him.

A dozen parents watch from the side of the mat. Katy's new friend Sam also watches... He looks kind of impressed.

INT. JUDGE POWELL'S CHAMBERS - MORNING

She walks in... And stops. Her office has been stripped clean. She hurries out... down steps... To... THE BASEMENT... She pauses outside the LADIES ROOM where another sign has been nailed up: "JUDGE POWELL'S CHAMBERS"

She opens the door. Sees workmen finishing moving her things in. And Tom sitting on her desk, near open toilet stalls, the codebook he took from her desk in his hands.

JUDGE POWELL
What the hell is going on here?

TOM
I read the codebook... And I see... Page one-twenty-three paragraph five... That the Sheriff assigns courtrooms and Sheriff's chambers. Given your recent rulings, I thought you'd be right at home here. You have your choice of seats.

As Judge Powell reacts.

TOM
Now I'm asking for warrants to search more than twenty possible meth labs my deputies have identified. If word of one of those warrants trickles out, you're out of a job. That's on page two-thirty-one paragraph three.

OFF JUDGE POWELL'S FACE

EXT. TRAIN TRACK OUTSIDE OF TOWN - DAY

Brad with Trista and Doc, and two of Doc's friends, LARRY and HANK, sit on bikes near where a dirt road crosses the tracks. A WHISTLE. A TRAIN SPEEDS TOWARDS THEM THROUGH THE TREES.

DOC
Don't be chicken. I do it all the time.

BRAD
Then you go first.

Doc grins. Without further talk he pedals towards the train tracks. Brad follows him. So do Larry and Hank. They hunch low over their bikes, pedaling furiously.

The train speeds towards them. Larry and Hank chicken out, fall back, and give up.

Doc reaches the tracks. WE HEAR A LOUD WARNING HORN... Doc bumps his way across. Brad comes after him. His face shows both fear and reckless determination to prove himself.

The train Conductor sees the boy emerge from the tree line. Nothing he can do. He looks more afraid than Brad does...

Brad has trouble going over the tracks. Nearly loses control of his bike. THE TRAIN'S HORN SOUNDS, DEAFENINGLY LOUD.

Brad makes it, by a whisker. Pedals on into the tree line as the train speeds past behind him. Doc raises a hand... Brad slaps him five, thrilled with his own daring.

DOC
Way to go! Here. I got you something. For your birthday.

He flashes a white tablet. Brad hesitates.

DOC
Take it. If you decide you don't want to try it, just flush it.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM

Brad studies his own face in the mirror. He holds the pill above the toilet, ready to flush it. There's a knock.

TOM (OS)
We're waiting, birthday boy!

Brad puts the pill in his mouth... And swallows it.

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - DINNER - SERIES OF SHOTS

Brad's pleasurable meth 'rush' is ending, and he's crashing. Dianne doles out meatloaf. The scraping of her spoon on the serving bowl is agonizing to Brad, the slices of meatloaf look nauseating. The banal conversation becomes torturous. Each monosyllable that Brad is forced to speak is a separate agony:

TOM
Saw some mud on your bike. You've been exploring, huh?

BRAD
Yeah.

TOM
Some pretty places around here.

BRAD
Very.

LATER - Halfway through dinner. Tom is talking about meth, while Brad pretends to listen and tries desperately not to throw up. He sips water and wipes sweat with a napkin.

TOM
Here's a strange thing -- we got some pills from one of the guys who was busting up the grocery. Says he bought 'em fifty miles upriver. The police lab says that chemically they're identical to the pills being sold in the casino and the ones we took from that boy's locker in school.

DIANNE
Strange... Even in professional labs it's very hard to get identical product without careful controls...

TOM
And we're talking about Mom and Pop operations with store-bought ingredients and improvised recipes. So how can they be cooked up fifty miles apart and turn out virtually identical?

EVEN LATER - they sing happy birthday to Brad...WE SEE AND HEAR IT FROM BRAD'S PERSPECTIVE...THEIR VOICES SEEM TO SWELL TERRIBLY LOUDLY. HIS DOG JUMPS UP AND TRIES TO LICK HIS FACE. THE CANDLE FLAMES COULD MELT HIS FACE.

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom sits hunched over a computer, studying the screen. Dianne brings him a cup of tea. He sits back, rubs his eyes.

DIANNE
How's it going?

TOM
Not so good. We checked twenty-five possible meth labs in town today and didn't find a damned thing. And we've had reports of fish kills five miles down river from town. Could be toxins from meth labs. We searched both banks for miles. Nothing.

Dianne looks at the screen. Tom scrolls through a DATA BASE he's built about meth. WE SEE PHOTOS OF DEAD VICTIMS... CRIME STATISTICS... DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT CAUSED BY TOXIC RUNOFF FROM METH LABS...

TOM
You're the chemistry teacher. How do I find labs that are mobile, silent, you can make this stuff anywhere...?

DIANNE
It's a chemical process. Find the step that can't be hidden...

Tom glances up at her... Then at the screen.

TOM
Heat.

INT. HELICOPTER - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Ray and Tom are in an LOH helicopter -- a Jet Ranger model, modified for military use, and piloted by a military pilot. Tom takes out a small device and begins manipulating it.

RAY
The hell is that?

TOM
Hand held thermal imager. Borrowed it from the Granite Falls Fire Department. They use it to see hot spots behind walls.

RAY
Just the way you 'borrowed' this chopper from the Air Force Base?

Tom doesn't answer that, so the pilot chimes in with:

PILOT
Actually, that would be a violation of posse comitatus. This copter's just out for a training run, and we're glad we could give you a lift.

TOM
See those five heat blooms?

RAY
Those are meth labs?

TOM
No. Mobile home generators ... a camp ground.

He points. Through the trees WE SEE tents and mobile homes.

TOM
We're looking for one bloom, off by itself... a higher heat range...

INT. HELICOPTER - LATER

The tree cover beneath is thick and green and glorious.

TOM
Nothing. But it's gotta be here. Take us north. RCR grid pattern.

PILOT
We've only got one more hour of airtime.

Tom searches with the imager. His frustration grows.

TOM
Nothing. Ray, it may be time to switch tactics...
(he lowers the imager and looks at Ray)
We're not having much luck finding them. Maybe we should make them find us.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Tom faces his men. He's angry and it shows...

TOM
We're gonna look for minor infractions. Follow the whores, the leg breakers and bust 'em the second they step out of line. Find reasons to shut the casino down, even if it's just for a few days for serving beers to minors. We'll bleed them for cash till whoever's supplying them with drugs sits up and takes notice.

GRADY
Tom, you stir up the hornet's nest and you're gonna get stung.

TOM
That's what I'm counting on.

INT. DOC'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

START ON A CRYSTAL... Crystal meth. A hand LIGHTS a pipe...

Doc inhales. Passes the pipe to Brad who inhales and passes it to Trista... Who catches him looking at her cleavage.

BRAD
Sorry... You're so beautiful.

She laughs and runs her fingers through his hair.

TRISTA
You're sweet.

She takes the pipe and takes a hit herself.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN MALL - VIDEO GAME PARLOR - AFTERNOON

Teenagers hang out, play video games, listen to bad music. Sam and Katy play a game together, in an advanced stage of puppy love. SUDDENLY there's a piercing female scream.

JENNY
Get your hands off me.

JENNY, a pretty high school girl, runs out of a video booth, her blouse half torn off. Gil, the musclebound young bouncer from the Gypsy Lee, gives chase and corners her...

GIL
You better find that money you owe, sweetheart, or...

MR. OWEN, the old proprietor of the parlor, steps up with a baseball bat, his hands shaking slightly.

MR. OWEN
Leave her alone...

Gil easily knocks Mr. Owen to the floor. Looks around.

GIL
Anybody else got anything to say?

No one does. Gil grabs Jenny roughly by the arm...

TOM (OS)
Let her go.

Gil looks around. Sees Tom walking towards him.

GIL
You're kinda old to be hanging around video arcades, Sheriff.

TOM
I said let her go.

Gil releases her... And faces Tom.

GIL
Sheriff, this was just a little personal disagreement and frankly none of your goddamn business.

Katy sees Gil covertly slip on spiked brass knuckles.

KATY
DAD?!

Tom doesn't see. He steps forward...

TOM
You're under arrest.

Gil throws a sucker punch with the brass knuckles. Tom ducks the blow, catches Gil's wrist and twists. Gil HOWLS.

Tom shoves Gil hard into a video game that LIGHTS UP with its own super violent display. All around the video parlor kids playing violent games gape at the real thing...

Gil flicks open a switchblade... and advances at Tom, shifting the blade side to side, probing for a target.

Tom peels off his shirt. He holds the shirt in both hands like a gladiator's net. Gil swipes... Katy SCREAMS. Tom catches the blade in his shirt. Flips Gil to the floor. Uses a foot to pin Gil's blade hand to the floor.

TOM
Let go of the knife.

Gil doesn't, so Tom stomps him with his free foot. Tom kicks the knife away. Handcuffs the woozy Gil to a stool.

Then Tom walks over to Katy and Sam as if nothing had happened. Katy looks at her dad with amazement: "Wow, did you really do that?" She's never seen this side of him.

TOM
Hi, guys. You must be Sam. Are you taking good care of my daughter?

SAM
Oh, yes Sir, Mr. Garrity... I mean Sheriff Garrity.

INT. GYPSY CASINO - BAR FLOOR - NIGHT

A stripper on stage, makes love to the brass pole. Lap dancers prowl around, servicing men who are getting drunk. Deni brings drinks to a table and a man paws her.

A TRUCKER catches the eye of a blonde lap dancer. She comes over.

Under her heavy makeup, WE RECOGNIZE it's Jenny, the high school girl from the video arcade. The trucker whispers in her ear. She nods. He gets up and leads her out.

They EXIT THE CASINO. Walk to his truck. And climb in...

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

She starts peeling off her shirt...

TRUCKER
How much is this gonna cost?

JENNY
Blow job is fifty, straight fuck is two hundred. For five hundred you can do whatever you want...

TRUCKER
What I want... Is for you to put your shirt back on, honey...

Tom, Ray, and Grady walk in from the front of the truck.

TOM
You're under arrest for solicitation. You have the right to remain...

Jenny makes a break for door. Tom anticipates her move, knocking it closed. He looks at her, as she starts to cry.

JENNY
Can't you just let me go?

TOM
Honey, I can't. You remind me of someone I loved. I'm gonna make sure you don't end up like her.

INT. GYPSY CASINO - LATER

Bev watches as Tom and his Deputies handcuff her 'dancers'.

BEV
I have no control over who comes here. Do your worst, my lawyer will have me out in five hours...

TOM
The first girl we busted tonight -- a little bird told me she's seventeen. That would make her a minor and just for employing her as a dancer I could shut you down for two weeks. Cuff her.

As Coombs tries to put the cuffs on her, Bev strikes out in fury... rakes his face with her long nails and pulls free.

She draws a stiletto from her boots and swipes at Tom... who dodges the blade, twists her arm behind her back, SLAMS her down hard on a table, and locks the cuffs on her himself.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLY'S BAR - NIGHT

The bar has been closed for the night. The ten people drinking and talking in low voices are not customers but the owners of different vice enterprises in Douglasville... Bev, Mickey, one of the Vietnamese Gangsters, Willy...

BEV
He's shut me down. Costing me ten grand a week...

WILLY
Why don't we just shove that big gun up his ass?

BEV
You have my permission to try.

VIETNAMESE GANGSTER
I know some guys who would take care of this. But they're expensive...

BEV
I'll give five thousand dollars cash to the person who ices that musclebound jarhead....

A voice speaks from the shadows:

VOICE
The only problem is he's not just a musclebound jarhead.

They look at a FIGURE to one side of the bar. WE CAN'T SEE HIM CLEARLY. He's turned away, shrouded in cigar smoke.

VOICE
The first rule of tactics. Know your enemy. He's trained in scuba and underwater recon... Knows how to operate a thermal imager... And the air force is staging training flights to accommodate him. Doesn't that make any of you curious?

He sips his whiskey. They wait. And then the smoke thins and he turns towards us, and WE SEE THAT IT'S HAMILTON!

HAMILTON
It made me curious. I had a friend do some digging. It's not hard to get someone's military file. Unless they don't have one...

WILLY
He wasn't in the service?

HAMILTON
He's got what they call a Black File. Classified Special Ops.

MICKEY
You saying he's fucking Rambo?

HAMILTON
No. But he's also not just some dumb army grunt who's just been getting lucky. He kept his head on his shoulders in places like Mogadishu, Sarajevo and Tora-Bora, so we better stop underestimating him.
(beat)
The difference between those places and here is that he's got personal connections here, that make him vulnerable.

A long moment of silence.

MICKEY
He said a little bird told him one of our girls was under age. I bet I know who that little bird is.

HAMILTON
Good. Take care of this.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAVE - NIGHT

Brad, Doc, Larry, and Hank walk across a field, with two girls, RACHEL and Trista, heading towards LIGHTS and POUNDING MUSIC. Doc is holding a flask...

DOC
It's just tequila. I've mixed meth and alcohol dozens of times.
(beat)
Do I seem fucked up to you?

BRAD
Yes.

Everybody laughs. Doc fishes six tablets out of a pouch. Passes them around. And the the flask of tequila. They each wash down their tablets with a swallow.

Brad is last. He hesitates a beat, then takes the tablet and a big drink.

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - NIGHT - INTERCUT

Tom watches a football game on TV... As Dianne reads... And Katy does homework. The phone rings:

TOM
Hello. Yeah? Can she talk?
Okay. I'm on my way.

He hangs up. Looks troubled. Dianne looks over.

TOM
Little kid. His mom's in trouble.
I know the family. Be back soon.

INT. DENI'S HOME - NIGHT - INTERCUT

A tiny shaking hand replaces the phone on its receiver. WE SEE Deni's little son, BRUCE... Looking terrified.

Mickey stands near him. In the background, WE SEE Deni who is bound and gagged, and has been beaten...

MICKEY
Smart boy. Now let's go upstairs.

The boy lunges to get near his mother... But Mickey grabs him and carries him up the stairs. Deni is helpless.

EXT. RAVE - NIGHT - INTERCUT

The Twenty-first Century version of a barn dance. Huge speakers blare INDUSTRIAL ROCK at two million decibels. A hundred stoned and drunk teens dance and sway and make out.

Brad dances with Trista...at first he's enjoying it. She steps closer to him and teases him a bit with her body.

But then the lights seems to SWIRL and the music POUNDS and suddenly Brad doesn't look so good. He stops dancing...

TRISTA
You okay?

Brad nods... But he's obviously not okay. He doubles over. Doc saunters over and Brad vomits all over Doc's shoes.

DOC
Jesus Christ.

EXT. DENI'S HOUSE - NIGHT - INTERCUT

Tom's police car pulls up outside Deni's modest house. Tom gets out of the car. Walks carefully to the front door. Rings the bell. Knocks. Tries the door. Nothing.

He hears something from the garage. Takes out his police flashlight and TURNS IT ON. Walks around the house. The sliding garage door is open at the bottom. He slides it up.

TOM
Deni?

He hears a GROAN from inside. SHINES HIS LIGHT in... and SEES... Deni... She's been beaten. Arms tied behind her. Strung upside down from a rafter. Tom starts in towards her.

She looks back at him... groans in pain. And something more than pain. She's trying to tell him something. Tom gets just enough of the gist of her warning to dive out of the way...

BAM, BAM, A GUN OPENS UP from behind him. Tom is hit... a glancing shot in the shoulder.

He dives INTO THE GARAGE... Rolls to one side but there's no place to hide and no weapons available. Except a rusty scythe mounted on a wall.

He glances at Deni who stares down at him, upside down. She's in bad shape, blood running over her forehead, dripping onto the floor. She moans. He whispers:

TOM
Shhh. How many, Den? One, two?

EXT. RAVE - NIGHT - INTERCUT

Rain has started, but the concert goes on. Teenagers with glassy eyes sway to mindless music as LIGHTNING FLASHES.

Doc, looking a little scared, tries to get Brad to drink water from a paper cup.

DOC
C'mon, just drink. FUCKING DRINK!

Brad is pasty white, hyperventilating, starting to have seizures, repeating one phrase desperately, like a mantra:

BRAD
Call my father. Call my father.

TRISTA
We should call 9-1-1...

DOC
Great idea. Do you know who his fucking dad is? You call 9-1-1 and we're all busted! He's gonna be fine.

But Brad looks even worse. His seizures become intense.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Deni glances over... As the door slides open... LIGHTNING FLASHES outside. Mickey steps warily into the garage, dripping wet from the downpour, gun in hand. His eyes sweep the shadows. He looks at Deni.

MICKEY
Where is he?

She stares back at him fixedly. He jams the gun to her breast.

MICKEY
Last chance, whorebitch...

Her eyes stay riveted on him... and he realizes it's not what she's looking at that's important, <u>but what she's trying not to look at</u>. Mickey looks up quickly. Sees...

Tom ABOVE HIM IN THE RAFTERS... Dropping down on him... Swinging the scythe. Mickey RAISES HIS GUN AND FIRES.

But he doesn't get the gun up in time... As Tom drops on him like a vengeful demon, and slices off Mickey's right arm at the elbow with a single blow from the scythe.

Mickey SCREAMS and his blood splatters Deni's face.

EXT. ROAD TO RAVE - AMBULANCE - NIGHT

The RED FLASHER of an ambulance... Racing up to the rave... its SIREN barely audible above the storm and the music.

Medics run to Brad and cluster around him. WE HEAR: "Tachycardia, Body Temperature 105, Hypothermia." They wrap him in blankets, administer fluids, and load him on a stretcher.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Tom steps out of a room where doctors are working on Deni. Sees little Bruce standing by himself. Walks over. Bruce looks up at him. A tough kid in a tough situation.

Tom kneels down to look him in the eye.

TOM
I'm Sheriff Tom. An old friend of your mama. I promise you we're gonna take good care of her. Okay?

Tom holds out his hand. The boy takes the big hand in his own and holds it tightly, like a talisman. Tom can't pull his hand away. Dr. Foster walks up and says softly:

DR. FOSTER
Sheriff... I'm sorry...

Tom glances at Bruce. Assumes its bad news about Deni.

TOM
Let's step away...

DR. FOSTER
It's not about his mom. It's your son. They're bringing him here...

INT. INTENSIVE CARE - NIGHT

Tom stands alone... watching... As a team of doctors work on Brad. A NURSE comes over. Tries to lead Tom out... But he pulls away... He's not going anywhere.

Agonizing seconds tick by. Then a monitor BLEEPS hopefully.

DR. FOSTER
Heart beat's stabilized. Body temperature's coming down.

Tom lets out the longest breath of his life.

EXT/INT. BRAD'S HOSPITAL ROOM/CORRIDOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tom stands outside Brad's room, talking into his cell phone. THROUGH A WINDOW, he can see Dianne tending to Brad.

TOM
(into cell phone)
Hold 'em there. Don't let 'em call anyone or talk to anyone.

Tom hangs up. ENTERS BRAD'S ROOM just as... Brad's eyes flutter open. Tom walks over to the bedside. Brad looks up at him. His eyes fix on Tom's face. He whispers:

BRAD
Sorry.

Tom looks down at his son and for one long heartbeat it's hard to interpret Tom's reaction. Is he angry? Tom bends, kisses Brad on the forehead. Strokes his son's hair.

Brad's hand finds his father's hand and they clasp tightly together. Total forgiveness. No words necessary.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - POLICE STATION HALLWAY - NIGHT

An irate FATHER tries to get into a room, but Ray blocks him.

FATHER
I have a right to know if my son's been charged! Let me through.

RAY
Relax, the Sheriff's just asking him a few friendly questions...

INT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Doc, and Larry, Hank, Trista, and Rachel, scared but silent, look up at Tom... Who shines a flashlight in their eyes.

TOM
You kids are all feeling okay, huh? That's good. I did a lot of crazy things when I was your age. The important thing is not to make the same mistake twice. Right?

They all nod, thinking he may let them go. They relax just a little. Which is a mistake. Because he's burning with controlled anger, and it comes out a bit as he asks:

TOM
Now, which one of you gave the drugs to my son?

They look back at him. Keep silent. He studies their frightened faces... Their eyes, in the flashlight's BEAM.

Doc is the only one who can't meet his eye. Tom motions to Larry, Hank, Rachel and Trista that they can go. They sprint for the door. Tom and Doc are alone. Tom moves closer.

DOC
I... know my rights. I get a phone call. I...

TOM
Let's me and you take a walk.

He takes Doc's arm very gently... But when Doc tries to pull away Tom's grip tightens. Tom leads him through a side door, down a deserted hallway... to some stairs.

TOM
My son had some rights, too.

They descend stairs in semi-darkness... Tom leads him down a dim hallway. Doc freaks out... Grabs a doorway.

DOC
Listen to me. Your precious little boy is like a drug vacuum cleaner, okay? He's been scarfing down meth and smoking weed long before tonight. I can bring in ten witnesses who'll say he also deals. We're talking about seriously fucking up his future, not to mention your future... Sheriff. So maybe the best thing for all of us is if you just let me go...

Tom looks back at him... Yanks him away from the door... And drags him on... Through a door marked "MEDICAL EXAMINER."

TOM
We're such a small town here, we don't even have a proper morgue.

Tom marches Doc through the Medical Examiner's Office to a steel door. Tom takes out a key and opens it. It looks like a big meat locker, with several dark forms on the floor.

TOM
We hold our bodies here for a couple of days till they come by and pick 'em up for the county morgue.

Tom FLICKS ON A LIGHT. They are rubberized black bags with zippers down the middle -- body bags. Doc tries to pull away but Tom holds him fast with one hand. Finds the bag he's looking for. Unzips it to show a face, frozen in death. One of the men who robbed the grocery.

TOM
Here's an O.D. for you. If not for the grace of God, that's my Brad. Wanna see how it fits?

Doc struggles, SCREAMS, but Tom manhandles him into an empty body bag, and zips it up till only Doc's face is showing.

TOM
Now, do you want to tell me where you got the meth? 'Cause otherwise I'm gonna go eat some dinner. They'll open this door in the morning...

Tom starts to close the door. Doc whimpers...

DOC
Wait... I steal it from my uncle. He's too fried to know it's gone.

TOM
Where does your uncle get it?

EXT. TOP OF GRAIN SILO - DAY

START ON ONE HAND, holding an ankle. PAN DOWN a leg, a torso, waving arms, to the haggard, extremely frightened face of a man in his forties, being held upside down by...

Tom... Who stares down at him. The man gasps...

DOC'S UNCLE
A trapper... Over by Potter's Creek.

CUT TO:

EXT. PATH THROUGH WOODS - DAY

A magnificent spruce forest... That slopes down to a babbling stream. Near the stream is an old wooden trapper's shack and some fur sheds for pelting and drying.

Tom and Ray approach, keeping behind the tree cover. Ray has his pistol out... Tom carries his big shotgun. They split up.

Ray ENTERS A FUR SHED and sees a variety of ominous traps: spring traps, coil traps, duke traps, bear traps. He picks his way carefully through the gloom and enters...

THE SECOND SHED. A pelting shed. Containers of hiding formula, wire stretchers, pelts drying on racks, dead animals yet to be skinned. Their cold, lifeless eyes look back at him. AND WE SEE ONE PAIR OF EYES FOLLOWING HIM.

Human eyes. Waiting for Ray to reach a spot in the floor. A hand moves. Ray SCREAMS as a trap closes on his leg.

Ray thrashes about but he can't get free. A heavy cloth is thrown over him. Secured at both ends. We can see Ray thrashing about helplessly inside this package, his screams barely audible through the thick wadding.

NEAR THE TRAPPER'S SHACK -- Tom approaches, reaches the door... And finds it open. He enters... FLICKS ON A LIGHT. It's scrupulously neat. An old stove. A TV...

Tom finds a door leading down. Descends steep steps...

To the BASEMENT TAXIDERMY ROOM. The grim tools of the trade are neatly arranged on shelves. Tail strippers, skinning and fleshing knives, nostril rasps, ear openers.

Stuffed, mounted animals and birds look down on him. Tom searches quickly. He finds a trunk hidden beneath a table.

He hears something. Whirls around. Nothing. Turns back... Pries the trunk open with the barrel of his shotgun.

Inside... There's a HISSSS... a coiled snake. It strikes at Tom... Who pulls back out of range. He finds a long tongs and lifts the snake out of the box. Sees what it was guarding... white tablets in baggies.

Tom senses something but before he can dodge out of the way... an enormous bat swoops down on Tom's back from behind. Actually, it's the Trapper himself, a long lean man dressed in black. In a flash he has his legs wrapped around Tom's chest, unbreakable cable garroting Tom's throat.

Tom tries desperately to shake him off... Bangs him against a wall... But the Trapper hangs on.... And Tom is gasping... Clawing at the wire... Has only seconds left.

Tom staggers to the stairs... Climbs... And dives off headfirst. BAM, the impact knocks the Trapper off.

Tom gets up... gasping for air. Sees only shadows. The Trapper has disappeared! He materializes behind Tom with a long pinning stake... Tries to run Tom through...

Tom parries the thrust with his shotgun. Wrestles the stake out of the trapper's hands. Trips him up and in a second the point of the stake is at the Trapper's throat.

TOM
You're selling plenty but you're not making any here. Where are you're getting it?

The Trapper looks back at him. The point of the stake presses in skin at his throat. He gulps... Whispers...

TRAPPER
Got somebody who slips me some... right from the source. Upriver ... Way above Judson Falls...

TOM
Don't you lie to me. There's nothing above Judson except a few logging camps.

They look at each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

Tom opens the satchel we saw him put his unit coin in. He begins taking out equipment... A Drager rebreather. Night goggles. Camouflage outfits. WE SEE the reluctance on Tom's face... He's going back into combat. Last, he takes out the unit coin and hangs it around his neck.

EXT. RIVER NEAR LOGGING STATION - DAYBREAK

Veiled in the night mist, Tom paddles a kayak silently. He's dressed to blend in with the forest, face painted green and yellow, hugging the bank.

VOICES BECOME AUDIBLE. Smoke rises above the trees. Tom heads for the bank and pulls the kayak up.

EXT. LOGGING CAMP - MORNING

Tom crawls through the forest and peers out at... Half a dozen bunkhouses. Lights are on inside. Tom points his thermal imager at one outlying bunk house. The imager GOES CRAZY WITH A HEAT READING! WE SEE FROM TOM'S FACE THAT HE'S FINALLY FOUND WHAT HE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR.

EXT. RIVER CLEARING - DAY

A chainsaw BITES into a tree. Cutters and Swampers working. Felled logs are trimmed, chained and dragged through tall grass by enormous Skidders to a workstation on the bank.

ANGLE ON TALL GRASS BILLOWING IN THE BREEZE... CAMERA COMES CLOSER, WE SEE eyes moving... IT'S TOM, hidden in a <u>ghillie camouflage suit</u>... it's like wearing one big grassy wig...

The driver of an enormous skidder CHUGS PAST within five feet of Tom and doesn't see a thing.

BANK WORK STATION - VIEW THROUGH TUBE - LATE AFTERNOON

Trimmed logs are stacked near the bank. A Workman saws the end off one big log... And begins <u>hollowing the log out</u>.

REVERSE ANGLE - SURFACE OF RIVER NEAR BANK

Bark and branches from the trimmed logs float in the water... near reeds... <u>One tube</u> pokes up among the reeds. PAN DOWN TUBE TO REVEAL TOM submerged in the river, watching.

EXT. BANK WORK STATION - NIGHT

Tom, wearing <u>night vision goggles</u>, inspects fifty logs. They all look the same. He melts back into the darkness as men approach. HE WATCHES THROUGH THE GOGGLES...

TOM'S POV THROUGH GOGGLES... The men find the log that has been hollowed out. Stuff it and replug it. One of them takes out a paint can...

As the paint brush comes out of the can it FLARES WILDLY in the night vision goggles. Each time the brush swabs the log, new parts of the log APPEAR TO CATCH FIRE!

EXT. BUNKHOUSE - NIGHT

Tom circles the bunkhouse we saw give the high Thermal Imager reading. No sign of anyone. He hurries to the door... Locked. He spots a motion detector. Pulls back and snips a hidden wire. Then he takes out a small pick... And has the lock open in seconds.

PULL BACK... A TINY FLAME. Smoke rises from a pipe. Dilated, crazed eyes... Someone watches from the trees.

INT. CONVERTED BUNKHOUSE

Tom FLICKS ON A FLASHLIGHT. It's an odd combination of converted logging camp bunkhouse and high-tech industrial drug lab. There are large jars of chemicals, glass vials, heaters for cooking meth, etc.

Tom HEARS SOMETHING... someone coming! No time to get out. Tom slips into the back bathroom. Peers out through a crack.

A large, dark form enters the bunkhouse. A LIGHT FLICKS ON. FOOTSTEPS PAD AROUND... SEARCHING... SLOWLY APPROACHING...

Tom holds his breath. He HEARS SOMETHING from just outside the bathroom door. PFFT. PFFT. He can't figure out what the sound is. Something GLEAMS near the door...

Tom pulls back at the last second, which is a good thing, because the sounds were the pull cord on a chainsaw...

Suddenly... ZZZAAAAAMMMMM! The chainsaw REVS UP and rips right through the bathroom door! Tom just avoids the blade.

But now the man wielding the chainsaw is in an awkward position with the saw sticking halfway through the door. Tom slams the door outwards, pinning the man's arms for a second.

LOU, a burly logger, pulls the whirling chainsaw free and tries to slice Tom in half. The blade bites right through bed posts and bunkhouse walls.

This big logger is so hyped up on meth he's superhuman. Tom slams him face first into a wall. It has no effect on Lou at all... It's hard to fight someone who feels no pain.

They grapple at close quarters over the chainsaw. Head-butting, biting, punching.

The saw gashes Tom's side, and then slices off Lou's leg at the knee... The meth maniac lets out a ROAR but keeps fighting. It's a bloody nightmare of a fight.

EXT. BUNKHOUSE/INT. BUNKHOUSE - SAME

Other loggers approach the bunkhouse with guns at the ready. They hear screams... THEY ENTER THE LAB.

A dark shape lurches at them... Covered with a blanket, thrashing about wildly. They wrestle him down. It's Lou.

ZZZAAAAMMMM. The loggers hear a chainsaw in the back of the lab. They run toward it with their guns drawn.

IN THE BACK BATHROOM - Tom cuts his way out, right through the log wall, with the chainsaw! He squeezes out as...

The loggers reach the back and see him getting away. They FIRE SHOTS at him but he disappears into nearby trees.

Tom sprints through the forest. Shots RING OUT behind him and bullets SLAM into trees.

Tom finds his kayak on the bank. <u>It's been cut into pieces</u>! A logger lying in wait laughs from behind him...

LOGGER
You're not going anywhere...

The logger SHOOTS... Tom dodges but the bullet clips him in the side. Tom spins backwards into the water. The logger runs forward to finish him off... but Tom is gone.

EXT. LOGGING CAMP DOCK - DAY BREAK

The loggers run to their boats... No luck starting them.

LOGGER
God damn it, he cut the fuel lines.

ANOTHER LOGGER
He doesn't have a boat either.
His only way out is the river.
Get him at the Narrows.

ANGLE ON FLOATING LOGS

Fifty banded-together logs, near shore, waiting to be towed down river. Tom is clearly in pain, but he unhooks them. The logs begin floating down stream like one big raft.

EXT. ROCK ON BANK NARROWS NEAR FALLS - DAWN

A Logger stands on a rock, rifle in hand, with a clear view of the river as it passes through the narrows and enters the falls. He scans the water's surface. And then sees...

Fifty logs like a school of giant fish, heading for the falls. He sweeps the river, looking for a person, a target.

ANGLE UNDERWATER

Tom is under the raft of logs... he's wedged himself between the steel band and two big logs. As the logs sweep through the narrows, he catches glimpses of the logger on the nearby rock. The rifle swings right at Tom... and past him, because he's all but invisible from the surface.

And then the raft of logs goes over the precipice of falls... And Tom is swept down and down in a thunderous maelstrom.

IN A SERIES OF NIGHTMARISH DISSOLVES WE SEE that the rocks could kill him, the banging together of the logs could kill him, he could drown, but Tom manages to hang on, to reposition himself facing down river, perhaps to ride a rogue log.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - TOM'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tom lies in bed, banged up and bandaged, looking up at... Ray, whose leg is in a cast. They talk in whispers.

RAY
You didn't have to do it alone, you damn fool.

TOM
I'm not the damn fool who stepped in the bear trap.

Dianne watches from outside the doorway.

BACK DOOR TO GARRITY HOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dianne and Ray argue quietly, so as not to disturb Tom.

RAY
If that bullet had been an inch to either side, he'd be dead. And he couldn't shoot back, 'cause he had no bullets in his gun. We used to go hunting. Tom had no problem shooting guns. Till somebody changed his mind.

DIANNE
And you think 'cause I'm a New York liberal it must have been me? Well, you're wrong. I admit I'm not a card carrying member of the NRA but... it was Tom. When he left the army he swore he was through with guns. He made that promise to himself, not to me. But I respect his integrity.

RAY
You're gonna have to decide whether you want to spend your old age with memories of your husband's integrity... Or with your husband.

Ray leaves. Dianne looks after him. Then at the shotgun.

INT. TOM'S ROOM - LATER

Tom dozes. Dianne enters... With the shotgun and a box of shells. She puts the gun and the shells near him on his night table. Tom's eyes open.

DIANNE
I told you not to start a fight. I never told you not to finish it.

His hands slowly close around the shotgun shells.

CUT TO:

EXT. POND NEAR GARRITY HOUSE - DAY

Tom walks with his father. Grandpa's clearly shocked...

GRANDPA
I just can't believe it. I've known Hamilton all my life.

TOM
He used that. He knew you and I had a blind spot.

LATER... They're sitting on a bench on the bank. Grandpa has drawn a map of the mill plant.

GRANDPA
Here's where the new machines are... The laminators, the presses. I always thought they were located off by themselves for safety reasons. But it would give them lots of privacy to do what they need to do.

TOM
How many people do you think would need to be in on it?

GRANDPA
Ten years ago Hamilton said we needed to modernize. Closed the mill for alterations. That's when he brought in the new machines, and about fifteen skilled workers to run them.

TOM
You know any of those guys?

GRANDPA
They don't mix with us old hands.
It's like two different worlds.
Those guys could be sealing anything
into beams and shipping 'em down
river we'd never know a thing...

Tom looks at the map... His finger follows the river...

TOM
The logs float in here... They're
moved onto the loading dock...

GRANDPA
And they're stacked here, before
they're brought in for cutting. They
probably pick out the marked logs at
night. I could poke around down
there... We just got a new shipment...

TOM
I can't let you risk that.

GRANDPA
I don't see how you can stop me.
I spent my life at that place.
If you're right about this, it
just makes me sick to my stomach.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - EVENING

Tom sits with Deni. They're parked in the woods. She's still black and blue in places but she looks surprisingly good. And he's stiff but clearly on the mend.

TOM
All warrants and charges against you
have been dropped. Take your son and
get far away. Find a decent job.
The two of you can start over.

DENI
And live on what till I do?

He slips her an envelope. She looks in and sees <u>cash</u>.

DENI
Not from your piggy bank?

TOM
The special expenses fund. I wish I could do more.

DENI
I wish you could, too...

She tucks away the envelope. Smiles at him...

DENI
But then I guess you wouldn't be the kind of man you are...

She leans close. He looks back at her, almost scared. These two had a major thing going as teenagers and WE SEE IT start to come back as she kisses him on the lips. Tom returns the kiss. Then he pulls away. Says in a husky voice:

TOM
Your bus leaves in two hours.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILL LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

A mill Guard walks his beat... After he has passed, Grandpa steps out of the shadows.

He's at the stacking shed near the loading dock. Hundreds of logs. They all look the same. He dons night vision goggles. AND SUDDENLY ONE LOG FLARES LIKE IT'S ON FIRE.

Grandpa hurries to it. Sees where it's been plugged. With an effort, he removes the plug. Sees a plastic tarp inside. And inside the tarp, baggies of meth.

FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. Grandpa panics...drops the plug. Picks it up. Gets it back in the log just in time.

And melts back into the shadows... As a few men come and start to remove the log he was looking at.

SEARCH MONTAGE - MORNING

-- Tom with State Police back-up presents a warrant to Morgan at the mill gate. They search the mill. The bank loading dock. The presses and laminators. Nothing.

-- Ray and State Police stop a lumber barge on the river. Crack open massive glued-together beams. Nothing.

-- Grady with the help of state police searches a railroad car filled with wood chips from the mill. Also nothing.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Tom and his Deputies sit together. Tom is furious.

TOM
There was more than a half ton of methamphetamine there last night. And this morning nothing.

COOMBS
Maybe the search warrants tipped 'em off...

TOM
All our warrants were deputized by federal magistrates. No local judge had a clue anything was up. The only locals who knew we were going in are right in this room.

They look at each other. Tom SLAMS his hand down on a desk.

TOM
If one of you is selling us out and I catch you, you better take your shot and kill me first, cause I wouldn't wanna do what I know I'll do to you...

They look back at him... He's not kidding.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Tom walks away from the station. And then he's on his guard as he sees a car idling. He puts his hand on his gun. But then he recognizes the driver of the car... It's Keith.

KEITH
Tom. How's your boy doing?

Tom walks closer. Relaxes and takes his hand off his gun.

TOM
Much better. Thanks.

KEITH
That's good. Listen, I haven't felt right since that mix up at the Casino. You've been doing good work here, Tom... And...
(lowers his voice)
I have some information that might help you...

Tom walks around and gets into Keith's car. Waits...

KEITH
This is hard for me...

TOM
I understand.

KEITH
I hope you do.

A hand comes up from the back seat... And presses a gun to Tom's head.

A big man opens the driver door and Keith gets out. The big man hands Keith a fat envelope... And gets in. Peels out of the parking lot, leaving Keith holding the envelope.

CUT TO:

INT. LUMBER MILL - THIRD-STORY SHARPENING ROOM - NIGHT

A room filled with ominous sharpening tools. It offers a bird's eye view of the town of Douglasville. Tom is dragged in by Morgan and several mill guards. Hamilton puts down a sharpening tool and smiles.

HAMILTON
Hello, Tom. Have a seat.

Morgan forces Tom down into a chair. Hamilton looks at Morgan, who reluctantly steps to the door.

MORGAN
I'll be right outside.

Morgan closes the door, and Hamilton and Tom are alone.

HAMILTON
Tom, you're causing me some problems. Oh, you and your friends didn't find anything, and you won't, but I can't give you the opportunity to keep poking around. It's bad for business.

Tom starts to stand. A gun appears in Hamilton's hand. There's a long, silent beat between them. Tom says softly:

TOM
My father worked for you all his life. You gave me my first job. I joined the service to be like you. Why are you doing this?

HAMILTON
You were far away, Tom, fighting other people's wars. This town was dying. Its main industry, its life's blood, could no longer sustain it. So this town made a deal, Tom. A deal for the future. It's a growth industry. Just the way lumber was when my grandpa started this mill. I like to think this town's been chosen for the same reasons it was chosen for the mill a century ago...

Tom cuts him off. He knows exactly what's going on:

TOM
It's surrounded by rugged forests so you can shelter a workforce. You can ship anything you want down river and no sniffing dogs will ever bother you. You can glue the drugs inside beams or ship 'em by rail under a ton of chips. If anyone ever gets too close, you got some way to flush the drugs on hand far down river at a moment's notice, I would guess through a long effluent pipe. You even have a casino to launder money.

Hamilton looks back at him, impressed and pleased.

HAMILTON
Excellent, Tom. Nearly a foolproof operation. Only one piece missing.

TOM
Control of town law enforcement.

HAMILTON
This isn't just about this town, Tom. This river passes fifty small cities and a hundred towns before it flows out to sea. When you first came home, you came to see me about going into business together. Here's the chance of a lifetime! It's a tremendous deal, a vast market...

Beat. The two men look down at the town beneath.

TOM
The only deal I care about is the one I made with the people down there who elected me.

HAMILTON
But it's all about them. New houses going up. Jobs. Even the textbooks your wife uses in her classes. You think the good people of this town like your own mother and father don't know deep in their hearts where the money's coming from?
(Tom tenses and Hamilton smiles)
I'm also fond of your children, Tom. You've got a beautiful family to look after. So you'll want to stop and think things over very carefully...

TOM
You so much as touch my family and...

Hamilton presses a buzzer. Morgan enters.

HAMILTON
See Sheriff Garrity off the premises.

Guards grab Tom by either arm and Morgan leads them away.

MORGAN
The old man is really fond of you. He says you've got balls.

Morgan turns and punches Tom in the nuts. Tom sinks down.

MORGAN
Maybe not as many as you had.

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Dianne and the kids play soccer. Tom stands apart, watching them whoop it up. Deep worry shows on his face.

TREES NEAR POND - LATER

Tom walks side-by-side with his father.

TOM
Tell me about Morgan

GRANDPA
Corporate security background. A hotshot marksman. I've seen him drop river birds from a quarter mile, with either hand.

TOM
I want you to take Dianne and the kids away for a while. An early Christmas vacation... As soon as we can set it up...

INT. GARRITY HOUSE - EVENING JAZZ PLAYS

Katy and Brad set the table... argue whether the napkin goes under the fork or the knife and spoon. The doorbell RINGS. Tom opens it to let in Grandpa and Grandma, laden with gifts...

TOM
Hope you're hungry. We've got a little turkey here...

GRANDPA
I hope you're thirsty. I might have a bottle or two...

He hands Tom four bottles. Katy and Brad run in to greet their grandparents. Hugs and kisses all around.

GRANDPA
I've got some brochures for our trip to San Francisco. You kids are gonna have a ball!

KATY
Wait till you see the turkey! It's bigger than I am.

BRAD
It's smarter than you are.

KATY
At least I know the fork goes on the left side.

Brad sticks his tongue out. She makes a face back. A few impressive kung fu punches and kicks are exchanged.

GRANDMA
Peace. Isn't someone going to show me this amazing turkey?

They head into the kitchen. Marvel at the big bird. A nice family moment. The phone RINGS. Tom picks it up...

TOM
Yeah? WHEN? JESUS! I'm on my way.

Dianne looks up from her cooking as he hangs up.

DIANNE
Tom, no. Not Thanksgiving dinner...

But Tom is already running for the door...

TOM
A fire over at Ray's Academy. Ray and some kids may be inside...

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE, Tom sprints for his patrol car.

Dianne follows him out, sees his shotgun on its rack. Hesitates and then takes it down and carries it out.

But she's too late as... Tom guns the motor. SPEEDS AWAY.

INT. POLICE CAR - EVENING

Tom drives like hell... Down a dark country road. Barking questions into his police radio.

Till he nears the town and sees a RED GLOW.

INT/EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

The big dinner is on hold. Meanwhile, Bingo, the family dog is standing by the back door, barking.

BRAD
This turkey smell is driving him nuts. C'mon, boy...

Brad opens the door and Boy and dog disappear into gloom.

KATY
I'm coming too.

EXT. RAY'S ACADEMY - EVENING

Tom drives up to Ray's academy. Flames shoot up through the roof. Police and firemen try to keep onlcokers back.

The town's one fire truck is parked outside. Pump men spray water on the Academy in'surround and drown' procedure.

Tom sprints over to FIRE CHIEF WILSON. Ray's wife KAREN and their son, Eldon, are also there. She's hysterical.

KAREN
HE'S IN THERE, TOM! GET HIM OUT.

WILSON
Hold her back.

Firemen drag Karen to safety. Tom steps up next to Wilson.

WILSON
Looks like arson. Hot spots by both doors and the windows. I can't send men in. We got two trucks coming from Lakeville. Till they get here all we can do is put the wet stuff on the red stuff...

Tom nods... Walks off towards the one fire truck.

EXT. GARRITY BACKYARD - SAME - INTERCUT

Brad runs after Bingo, and Katy follows Brad. The dog growls and disappears into some bushes. His growling ends with a single high-pitched CANINE CRY. Then silence.

BRAD
Something happened to him.

Katy looks around... A little spooked.

KATY
Let's go back...

BRAD
No way. We gotta find him.

Brad walks towards the bushes, calling his dog's name.

EXT. RAY'S ACADEMY - FIRE TRUCK - SAME - INTERCUT

Tom walks to the fire truck. Everybody's watching the blaze. Nobody sees Tom take a fire retardant silver blanket from the truck. Also a Halligan tool -- four feet long, with a pick on one end and a shovel on the other.

Tom passes near KELLY, a pumpman manning a hose and wearing headphones. He's taken off his jacket and helmet. Tom picks up the jacket and helmet and begins pulling them on as he heads around the side of the burning Academy building.

EXT. GARRITY BACKYARD - SAME - INTERCUT

Katy and Brad, fifteen feet apart, wade through bushes. Brad finds Bingo -- the dog has been stabbed to death.

BRAD
OH, NOOO!

KATY
What? What is it?

Suddenly Katy is <u>grabbed from behind</u> by a Thug. But she knows what to do. We've seen her practice this move over and over in Ray's academy. She uses her attacker's own weight to flip him, and kicks him as he falls.

Then she tries to run. But her attacker grabs her ankle. Trips her. She struggles but he pulls her off her feet.

THUG
C'mere you little bitch.

He's on his knees. She's on her back, kicking at him. He slowly reels her in. Katy screams in terror... The Thug looks down at her menacingly...

Suddenly CRACK... He topples to the grass, out cold.

REVEAL BRAD STANDING THERE WITH A ROCK IN HIS HAND. He's ice calm... FOR THE FIRST TIME WE SEE THE FATHER IN THE SON.

BRAD
You okay? C'mon, run to the house.

Katy is too scared to run. He tugs her behind a tree.

BRAD
Stay here. No one will see you.

Brad sprints to the house. Dianne is waiting there anxiously.

BRAD
Mom! There are men out there!

DIANNE
Tell Grandpa to call Tom on his cell.

Dianne walks out alone, unarmed...

BRAD
Mom? MOM!

But she's heading into the darkness, calling Katy's name.

EXT. RAY'S ACADEMY - INTERCUT

Tom has circled to the back of the academy... which is GLOWING ORANGE. He touches the back door and jerks his hand away. He takes the Halligan tool and steps to one side of the doorway. He swings the pick end of the tool, piercing the door.

BOOM! BACKDRAFT! A RED FIREBALL shoots out the door. If Tom hadn't stepped to one side it would have killed him.

Tom waits for the backdraft to die down. Firemen run around the side of the Academy. Shout for Tom to stop. But he <u>goes in</u> fast and low, hurtling in through a WALL OF FLAME!

INSIDE THE ACADEMY there's swirling smoke. Tom wades through it. Sees Ray... With two kids, huddled in a safe corner. Ray leads one student and carries the other over to Tom.

Tom and Ray wrap the kids in silver blankets... <u>Burst out through the wall of flame together</u>! Singed but safe.

A crowd has formed outside. When they see Tom, Ray, and the kids emerge miraculously through the flames there's applause... Cut short as the ROOF OF THE ACADEMY FALLS IN! Another few seconds and they would have all died. Karen hugs Ray.

Tom's CELL PHONE RINGS. He listens, then says frantically:

TOM
(into cell phone)
They want me, not you. Get everyone inside the house. I'm on my way.

Tom sprints to his car. Ray runs after him...

RAY
What is it? Tom?

But Tom drives away at full speed.

EXT. GARRITY HOUSE - BACKYARD - EVENING - INTERCUT

Dianne hurries through the gloom, calling Katy's name.

Katy emerges from her hiding place. Runs to her mother, who hugs her. They hurry back towards the house...

And stumble right into a Gunman... Who rises from hiding to point a pistol at them. Dianne reacts instinctively -- steps in front of Katy. Says with unexpected strength:

DIANNE
I will not let you harm my child.

But the Gunman has no sympathy or mercy. He points his gun at her. Then... BOOM. The Gunman falls backwards.

Grandpa emerges from the shadows, the big shotgun in his hands, proud to finally be fighting. Brad runs up.

BRAD
Dad said to get inside the house.

Brad helps Dianne lead Katy towards the house. Grandpa brings up the rear, shotgun in hand.

Morgan materializes out of the darkness. He steps quickly to the fallen Gunman. The man is dead. Morgan glances up and sees the four shapes heading for the house. He raises his own gun with a marksman's aim.

ANGLE ON BACK DOOR OF HOUSE

Grandma is waiting near the back door. She helps Dianne, Katy and Brad in. Grandpa is last. It appears that he will make it. Then a shot RINGS OUT. Grandpa staggers.

DIANNE
BRAD! No...

But Brad doesn't heed her... Doesn't hesitate. RUNS OUTSIDE to his grandfather. A SHOT just misses him. Brad half leads and half drags his wounded grandfather inside. Grandpa collapses on the floor, shot in the back.

EXT. ROAD TO GARRITY HOUSE - EVENING

Tom speeds down the road, FLASHER AND SIREN GOING. Turns onto the long driveway. Slows for just a second and then ROARS FORWARD.

Two Thugs in ambush stand up from the shadows. They raise guns. OPEN FIRE.

The police car's tires are SHOT OUT. Its windshield EXPLODES. It veers into the side of the house.

The two thugs KEEP SHOOTING... As flames jump around the car. They emerge from the shadows. RIDDLE IT with even more bullets. When they're convinced that no one could have survived inside it, they approach the car. One of them opens the passenger door. IT'S EMPTY! The Halligan tool is wedged between the steering wheel and the accelerator.

The thugs turn... And Tom is standing there like an avenging angel. One of them tries to shoot him. But Tom catches the barrel of the gun, rips it away, and clubs the thug with the butt so hard we hear the man's skull crack.

Tom turns to the second thug. Who tries to flee. But he only gets two steps away before Tom grabs him, lifts him off the ground, and hurls him ten feet into the flaming remains of the police car. WE HEAR the thug scream in agony.

A convoy of police cars and fire trucks approach from town.

WE GET A GLIMPSE of Morgan watching from a distance. He knows he's lost his chance, so he melts back into the night.

Tom hurries to the house. BURSTS IN THROUGH THE DOOR. Finds the whole family inside, sobbing. Tom cradles his father in his arms, soaked with his blood.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL HOME - WAKE - DAY

The family in mourning. Friends pay their respects. Dianne holds Grandma, whose body shakes. Brad looks pale. Sam tries to comfort Katy, who weeps silently.

Tom draws Ray aside for a moment.

TOM
I can't wait. I'm gonna settle this. I can't ask you to come...

RAY
You don't have to ask.

EXT. TOWN CEMETARY - AFTERNOON

A procession of mourners... Dozens... Hundreds... Accompanying Grandpa's corpse to its final resting place.

These are the townsfolk of Douglasville. Grandpa was one of them... WE SEE from their faces how much he will be missed.

A police car drives up. Dianne gets out... With Brad and Katy. Tom helps Grandma out and half-supports her. He's limping from his wounds and she can barely walk.

LATER, as Grandpa's coffin is lowered into an open grave, Grandma lets out a single KEENING moan. Tom takes a handful of dirt. Throws it in.

WE SEE SADNESS IN HIS FACE, BUT ALSO EXPLOSIVE ANGER. FAINTLY, WE HEAR THE FIRST STRAINS OF 'AMAZING GRACE'

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER... AS AMAZING GRACE CONTINUES

TOM BREAKS AWAY FROM A CROWD OF MOURNERS AND GETS INTO HIS POLICE CAR... AND ROARS AWAY.

WE SEE Vergil watching him roar away. Take out a cell phone and discreetly punches in numbers...

EXT/INT. THE GYPSY LEE CASINO - EVENING

Closed for the night... But a light is on in the first floor. It's Bev... Sipping whiskey and cradling a sawed off shotgun. Luke is there too. And Carl Schmidt. She listens to a cell phone. Says, just a bit drunkenly:

BEV
That's not bad news. That's good news.

And she hangs up. Takes another drink. And sees...

CAR HEADLIGHTS... Headed her way. A POLICE FLASHER. She stands up. Steps outside the front door of the casino. Carl and Luke follow, also holding weapons.

A police car speeds towards them along the dirt road, over the parking lot, heading for the river edge...

BEV
Soon as he steps out of the car, blow the mother fucker away.

They get ready with their guns. Except Tom doesn't stop. He doesn't even slow down. What he does do is <u>speed up</u>...

AND ROAR right across the walkway towards them, snapping the closed walkway gate like so much tinder.

Bev SHOOTS first... Then they all FIRE at the oncoming car. A HEADLIGHT SHATTERS. The WINDSHIELD EXPLODES. Gil sees that it's not going to work and dives into the water to save himself. Carl Schmidt runs back into the casino...

But Bev stands her ground... Firing SHOT after SHOT till the police car smashes into her... and then busts right through the wooden front wall and PLOWS into the row of slot machines that Carl Schmidt is hiding behind. The enormous bouncer screams as he is pinned to the back wall.

OUTSIDE THE CASINO, cars pull up. Police and townspeople. Smoke and flames are visible from inside the casino. A figure walks slowly out. It's Tom. He limps back across the walkway to them. We see from their faces how much they respect him. All he says, tightlipped, is:

TOM
This casino is closed.

CRASH. The big GYPSY LEE CASINO sign swings down and splinters.

GRADY
Tom, it's over.

Tom doesn't reply. Gets into a police car and drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMILTON'S MILL - SECURITY OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

Hamilton calmly addresses security staff. Vergil walks up.

HAMILTON
Keep the gate locked. Juice up the fences. When he shows, ask to see a warrant. If he tries to force his way in, shoot him down.

As they walk away, Vergil tells Hamilton...

HAMILTON
He may come with the Feds....

HAMILTON
(to Morgan)
Anything we have in our tanks... Drugs, toxins, residue... Flush it into the river.

EXT. HAMILTON'S MILL - EVENING

Guards posted... Sentries watching the road... All is quiet.

UNDERWATER - SAME

Tom swims underwater... Finds the effluent pipe snaking away from the mill... WE DON'T NEED TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HE'S DOING... But for the record, he's placing a timed charge on the pipe.

INT. HAMILTON'S OFFICE - EVENING

Morgan comes in. Hamilton and Vergil are monitoring police reports on Vergil's walkie-talkie.

MORGAN
Maybe he's not coming.

HAMILTON
He's coming. Keep a double guard all night long if necessary...

BOOM. A DISTANT BUT LOUD SOUND... Morgan takes out binoculars... Scans the perimeter.

MORGAN
Perimeter looks secure...

HAMILTON
Jesus H. Christ.

Morgan lowers his binoculars and sees what Hamilton has spotted... THE RIVER ITSELF IS CATCHING FIRE! Like a directional oil slick. The blaze is heading towards the mill!

HAMILTON
That bastard.... Cut the flow.
(Hamilton grabs the mic himself and shouts into it)
SHUT OFF THE GODDAMN PIPE!

But the swath of FLAMING RIVER keeps coming. Reaches the mill. BOOM! EXPLOSIONS! Flames and smoke billow.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Chaos at the mill... Workers and Guards fight the fires.

One SECURITY GUARD is left at the locked main gate. Staring out, through the smoky darkness. He hears something...

A ROAR! TWO IMPOSSIBLY LARGE EYES SUDDENLY GLARE AT HIM. The Guard peers through the smoke and darkness and sees... A GIANT AS BIG AS A SKYSCRAPER CREEPING TOWARDS HIM!

It's the four-story WHEEL LOADER! High-beams LIT UP. Forks and top clamps like the arms of a dinosaur... With Tom at the controls. It reaches the fence... And plows right through it!

The electrified fence bends and then RIPS AND SPARKS. The gate with its "HAMILTON'S MILL" sign crashes down.

The wheel loader knocks over several mill structures. And rolls to a stop in the main loading dock. Tom slides to the ground, big shotgun in hand. He wades through the smoke.

INT. MILL - SAME

Tom enters the mill... Oddly empty and silent because all the action is outside, as they try to fight the fires.

And then OVERHEAD LIGHTS BLINK ON one by one, following Tom's progress. Hamilton's voice SPEAKS FROM THE INTERCOMS:

HAMILTON (OS)
Well done, Tom. Tactics haven't changed much from my day to yours. To breach a perimeter, create a diversion.

The monitor screens near the sawing stations BLINK ON one by one. Tom sees Hamilton's face looking down at him.

HAMILTON (OS)
But it was all for nothing. The people in town don't really want your help. They like things just the way they are. That's why you had to come all alone, Tom. We've got you outnumbered fifty to one...

Tom walks forward purposefully. Says back to a camera:

TOM
You're wrong. We're all alone here. It's just you and me.

There is an ominous WHIRRING as the mill machinery -- saws, pulping machines -- comes to life.

HAMILTON
Sorry about your father, Tom. He knew what was going on here but he chose not to see it. That kind of fear is healthy. It increases life expectancy.

Tom hears something... Pivots in a 360 sweep... But it's just the MASSIVE CONVEYOR BELT STARTING UP.

HAMILTON
You're familiar with the type of fear I'm talking about, Tom. It's why you left the army. Left is a kind word.

CLOSE ON TOM'S FACE... As he listens... And walks forward...

HAMILTON
You quit, Tom. It ate you up. You turned away. You ran away.

TOM
I'm not running any more.

Tom stops... More instinct than anything else. He senses something... and dives to one side. It saves his life as...

Morgan, Vergil, and three Mill Guards step in his path and OPEN FIRE. Tom takes refuge behind a stack of logs.

BACK OF MILL - NEAR FENCE - SAME

A Guard patrols the back perimeter of the mill, listening to instructions on his walkie-talkie. He walks under the mill's fence. Senses something... Looks up...

As a shadowy form drops on him. It's Ray. He knocks the Guard unconscious. Takes his gun and walkie-talkie.

INT. MILL - UNPROCESSED LOGS - SAME

The mill guards split up and search for Tom in stacks of unprocessed timber. OVERHEAD SECURITY CAMERAS PAN, SEARCHING FOR HIM AS WELL.

HAMILTON (OVER INTERCOM)
He's in Row Three...

A Mill Guard darts around a pile of lumber to Row Three and comes face to face with Tom... And his shotgun.

TOM
Drop your gun.

HAMILTON (OVER INTERCOM)
His gun is empty! Shoot him!

The Guard decides to follow this bad advice. BOOM! The blast from the big shotgun shreds the Guard's chest.

Then Tom hears something... feels something... The entire stack of enormous logs is shifting... Beginning to roll.

The floor becomes a ramp and the logs roll down it, sweeping Tom and three mill Guards onto the conveyor belt.

ANGLE ON HAMILTON

Now in the booth, working the controls..

ANGLE ON MORGAN AND VERGIL

Splitting up, running to find vantage points that look down on the conveyor belt. Morgan finds one, pulls out his gun, and aims carefully ... He's got a clear shot at Tom...

A bullet ZINGS into the steel inches from Morgan's head! He takes cover... Spots Ray high in the third story, firing down. Morgan returns fire... And barks into a cell phone.

ON THE THIRD FLOOR ... Two Guards hear MORGAN's orders... And start FIRING at Ray... Who returns FIRE.

ANGLE ON TOM

On the conveyor belt with three Guards -- ten-foot steel walls on either side... no way for them to climb out. So they have to fight it out and at the same time stay alive as...

The logs are swept INTO THE DEBARKER! Two massive Rosser Heads strip bark off. A Guard SCREAMS as he is 'debarked'.

ON THE THIRD FLOOR

Ray dives from cover across ten feet of empty space, bullets from security guards following him. He finds better cover and RETURNS FIRE, and a security guard goes down.

Ray grins... hears movement from the shadows behind him. He spins and tries to fire. Gun empty. He grabs another clip but he's too late... his gun flies out of his hands as...

HE IS SHOT at close range. Ray grunts in pain and slumps down. Morgan walks out, gun ready for another shot.

ON THE CONVEYOR BELT

Tom and the two Guards are swept into the mill's sawing stations, one more deadly than the next. There's a nightmare struggle as Tom battles with the Guards as they all try to avoid... SEVEN FOOT CHAIN SAWS and WHIRLING BAND MILL BLADES.

IN THE CONTROL BOOTH

Hamilton works the controls furiously, glancing at the video screens, punching buttons to utilize specific saw blades.

ON THE CATWALK ABOVE THE CONVEYOR BELT

Vergil runs in front of Tom. Leans out for a clear shot.

Tom sees him. Nothing he can do but duck TOWARDS THE TRIMMER SAW! PING! PING! Vergil's shots HIT THE BLADE.

Vergil runs for a spot with a better angle... He's looking right down at the wood that comes out of the trimmer saw. The second Tom emerges on the conveyor belt he's a dead man.

ANGLE ON TOM... Being swept towards the saw. He knows what's coming. Casts about desperately.

BACK TO VERGIL... Looking down at the saw. Focused...As only trimmed wood comes out...

So he doesn't notice movement beneath a pile of wood that comes out and is moving down the conveyor. Till Tom SITS UP FROM UNDER THE PILE and swings his shotgun at Vergil...

Vergil sees him and shoots wildly...BAM, BAM, BAM...

Tom shoots only once... BANG... Blows out a strut supporting the catwalk on which Vergil is standing. He falls... ONTO THE CONVEYOR!

The big man loses his balance... and tumbles into a chute leading to a giant chipper. Vergil clings to the edge, SCREAMING. He loses his grip, and is swept down the chute.

IN THE BOOTH

Hamilton hears a scream... Sees blood... He knows somebody has just died... Can't get a good video view of who it was. He punches up different video images. Then he sees...

Tom standing alone, shotgun in hand. He's made it through the gauntlet of saws. He's bleeding and bruised, but he looks determined as he walks towards the control booth.

Hamilton grabs a pistol... Cracks open a window of the booth... SHOOTS down at Tom.

Who takes aim with the big shotgun and BLAM... The blast severs the cable the control booth is suspended from.

The booth falls from its perch. Tumbles onto the conveyor belt... Comes to rest on its side. As the conveyor belt sweeps it along towards the massive CHAIN SAWS.

INSIDE THE BOOTH, Hamilton gets to his feet. He can see through the window of the booth the fate that awaits him. But the booth has fallen on its side and the only door to the booth is pressed downward against the conveyor.

He hammers desperately on a side window... SCREAMS...

HAMILTON
TOM, THAT'S A SHUT-OFF LEVER.
PLEASE GOD, TOM, I'M BEGGING YOU...

Tom looks back at him... Sees a scared old man who he's known all his life. Almost against Tom's better judgement he steps to the old lever. Tries to pull it. It doesn't budge. Meanwhile, the booth is ten feet from the saws.

Tom throws down his shotgun and pulls the lever with both hands. The conveyor belt stops just in time.

Morgan steps out of the shadows, a gun in either hand, one pressed to the back of Ray's head, the other aimed right at Tom. He circles for a better shot, dragging Ray along.

MORGAN
Kick your gun away, Garrity or I blow his brains out...

RAY
Don't do it.

But Tom kicks away his shotgun. Morgan steps closer.

MORGAN
You bring any State or Feds with you?

TOM
Just the two of us.

MORGAN
Very admirable. Goodbye hero...

Morgan aims at Tom's forehead. Ray moves like lightning, pushing Morgan and ducking away. Morgan SHOOTS Ray in the shoulder, and almost instantly recovers and re-aims at...

Tom who dive rolls for his shotgun, and comes up firing. Tom beats Morgan to the shot. BOOM, half the security chief's head flies off in a red arc of blood and brain.

Then all is quiet. Tom walks to Ray who has slumped down. Tom checks for vital signs. Ray opens one eye.

TOM
Ray. You okay...?

He sees Ray looking behind him... Tom turns... And sees...

Hamilton, who freed himself from the booth and now stands a few feet from Tom. His gun points right at Tom's head.

HAMILTON
You brave, foolish son of bitch. It was all for nothing, Tom. A week from now this town will be back to the way it was. GOD DAMN YOU FOR MAKING ME DO THIS.

He cocks the gun... Tom looks back at him.

TOM
Look old man...

Hamilton looks... From this loading dock where the fight has ended, the whole mill yard is visible.

The townspeople of Douglasville stream through holes in the fence... Hundreds of them, men and women... Some with torches... Others with guns and baseball bats. They fight Guards... disarm them... take possession of the mill.

Hamilton watches... Still holds the pistol... But it shakes in his old hand as tough, angry townspeople surround him.

Tom walks right at him. Hamilton could kill him if he wanted... WE SEE he's thinking about it. But he just looks old and sick and pathetic as Tom takes the pistol from his shaking hands and locks handcuffs on the old man's wrists.

MINUTES LATER - MILL YARD

Tom -- half-supporting and half-carrying Ray -- limps out past townspeople who look at them silently, respectfully... WE SEE A FEW FACES WE RECOGNIZE... FROM THE JURY... MR. OWEN... JIMMY AND JESSICA...

Tom and Ray pass Grady who is leading Hamilton towards a police car. Grady puts his hand on the old man's head and pushes it down. Hamilton takes a last look at his mill... And then bends and gets meekly into the back of the car.

An ambulance is nearby. The crew runs over with a stretcher. As they load Ray on, Tom squeezes Ray's hand, and Ray squeezes back. WE GET A SENSE that Ray will be okay.

Tom heads towards a familiar SUV. Dianne, Katy, and Brad are there. The SUV rolls away through the busted gate. Townspeople make way, respectfully, for it to go.

Tom's hand finds Dianne's hand. And they drive away, with the flames from the mill flickering off their faces, savage yet somehow very purifying.

FADE OUT.